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TOGETHERNESS FOR MISSION IN CATHOLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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TOGETHERNESS FOR MISSION IN CATHOLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

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Jonathan Mangar

Relationships are central to education, especially in Catholic schools, where love for others is espoused as a core value. Most studies of professional relationships among educators are focused on routines, processes, and classroom standards. The present study aims to expand this discussion into the human, social, and spiritual dynamics of working together toward mission fulfillment. The purpose of this qualitative work was to explore and describe the professional relationships among teachers and administrators in private Catholic high schools in a large metropolitan diocese and to investigate how these relationships led to mission fulfillment. The study incorporated the theoretical frameworks of the community of practice (Wenger, 1998) and organizational citizenship behavior (Organ, 1988) as ways to identify and classify behaviors and dynamics.

The study included administrators and faculty members at two Catholic high schools and answered the questions (1) How are relationships formed and maintained among teachers and administrators in a Catholic secondary school, as evidenced by organizational citizenship behavior? and (2) In what ways do these relationships affect the practices aimed at fulfilling the school's mission? Within the methodology of a multiple exploratory case study (Hancock and Algozzine, 2006; Yin, 2018), the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with teachers and administrators,

observed educators working together, and analyzed content including foundational documents and other materials relating to mission fulfillment.

Coding for values and patterns (Saldaña, 2013) led to the formation of the following three themes: educators demonstrated genuine concern for others; school communities functioned as families; mission was centered in all aspects of school life. Within each of these categories fell different behaviors including altruism, courtesy, trust, service, and love for mission. Practiced daily, these led to specific actions that supported mission, such as decision making and participation in faith activities. Mission, in turn, fostered togetherness by giving educators a common purpose. The results of this study have implications for future research on relationships in both religious and secular schools; they also have the potential to change practices that isolate into those that unify. Above all, these cases demonstrate the endurance of togetherness in Catholic schools even in the most isolating circumstances.

DEDICATION

First, I dedicate this work to the glory of God, for without Him nothing is possible. “For those who love God, all things work together unto good” (Romans 8:28).

I dedicate this work also to those I love, who have taught me the meaning of *togetherness*. This work is inspired by you.

This dissertation study is also dedicated to the family of administrators, teachers, and staff who give life to the elementary and high schools of Brooklyn and Queens.

Lastly, I dedicate this dissertation to the memory of John R. Costello, Ph.D. (1942-2015) and Brother Michael Fisher, F.M.S. (1948-2019), who inspired me to think, learn, and wonder. May they rest in peace with God forever.

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"If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other."

– Mother Teresa

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Relationships are central to the field of education: most phenomena that occur in schools and other educational settings revolve around how a person interacts with others. How administrators, teachers, and students interact with one another, both within and between these groups, have effects on how well the mission of the school is fulfilled (Dosen, 2016). In Catholic education, the togetherness of a school community is essential in living out the school's mission, as demonstrated in the National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools (NSBECS) (Ozar & Weitzel-O'Neill, 2012). These standards have been used in strategic planning at the diocesan level (Fleming, 2015). Throughout the standards, the repetition of both mission and community emphasizes the importance of both to the success of Catholic institutions. In Standard 5 about governance and leadership, for example, school leaders are deemed responsible for faithfully fulfilling the mission and for maintaining trusting relationships and ongoing communication with one another and with diocesan authorities. In Standard 7 concerning academic excellence, faculty are asked to participate in professional development together and to instill relationship building skills in their students (Ozar & Weitzel-O'Neill, 2012).

The priority placed upon relationships makes it important to focus research on them. The present study focused on Catholic high schools in a metropolitan diocese in the American Northeast. The researcher investigated professional relationships and the circumstances that affect them using the qualitative research tradition of case study (Creswell & Poth, 2016; Yin, 2018). The goal of the study was to solidify a description of

how togetherness drives and is driven by the fulfillment of the mission and vision statements of Catholic schools.

Purpose of the Study

Describing how people come together for mission is a way to discover a mode of educational co-leadership that has at its core the goal of bringing self and other into relationship to deepen learning. This line of thought was derived from ethnographic and ideological work on interpersonal relationships and community in schools and the effect of these on school leadership (Senge, 1990; Starratt, 2004; Benham & Murakami, 2010). The importance of togetherness for mission lies in its ability to establish more profound connections among educators, enriching each person's willingness to give of oneself and receive from others. The present study investigated how these relationships are lived. The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore and describe the professional relationships among teachers and administrators in private Catholic high schools in a large metropolitan diocese and to investigate how these relationships led to the fulfillment of the mission of each institution.

Theoretical Framework

The present study was framed by two main theories: the community of practice framework (Wenger, 1998 in Mercieca, 2017) and organizational citizenship behavior (Organ, 1988). These theoretical bases provided categories of behaviors and interactions as a baseline for data analysis and were used to assemble a model of togetherness as explained in the conceptual framework (Figure 1).

Communities of Practice

The concept of the community of practice was first developed by Lave and Wenger (1991), whose study of trade apprenticeships showed that learning occurred more profoundly when learners were together in community and experienced a sense of belonging than when they simply received information in a passive way. Wenger (1998) delineated three dimensions of the community of practice: joint enterprise, mutual engagement, and shared repertoire (Mercieca, 2017).

The joint enterprise of a community of practice is what causes it to come together and what it has in common – its purpose and professional body of knowledge. Joint enterprise, also called domain, is the endeavor for which people in a certain profession combine their skills and expertise. Mutual engagement, or community, concerns the relational dynamics of the people who are gathered. This is characterized by members' commitment to one another and to their cause. Over time, trust and respect bind the members as they learn and work as a unit. Shared repertoire, or practice, is what the individuals do together as a result of their experience in community. This is the dimension of the community of practice in which collective identity is solidified. As a whole, the community of practice grows as a result of shared stories and experiences as well as shared leadership (Mercieca, 2017).

Organizational Citizenship Behavior

Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) is a paradigm within organizational theory described by Organ (1988, 1997) and extrapolated on by others (Podsakoff et al., 1990; Burns & DiPaola, 2013). This framework is used to describe behaviors that are extra-role, or not specified in one's job description, that help others and boost morale and

satisfaction in the workplace (Organ, 1997). Though Organ (1988) categorized these behaviors into five groups, he (1997) questioned his own categorizations in light of the views of other scholars, and debates on these labels continued into the new millennium (Jahangir et al., 2004). Nevertheless, the original five categories are utilized in most studies on OCB (Podsakoff et al., 1990).

Podsakoff et al. (1990) provided clear definitions of these categories. The first category, altruism, includes helping others with work-related tasks. Secondly, conscientiousness involves exceeding role-based expectations regarding organizational policy, such as attendance, complying with regulations, and managing work time. The category of courtesy includes attitudes and actions aimed at avoiding or de-escalating conflict with colleagues. Sportsmanship involves avoiding complaining about events, policies, or people. Lastly, civic virtue encompasses volunteerism as well as caring about and participating in "the life of the company" (p. 115).

Further research on OCB has warranted the inclusion of additional constructs that expand this theory. Those studies expanded Organ's (1997) concept of OCB to include additional influencing factors and measurable outcomes and were included in the design of this framework (Jahangir et al., 2004; Burns & DiPaola, 2013). A more detailed analysis of these can be found in the review of related literature.

In reviewing the theory for the present study, it became clear that the dynamics being investigated required a heightened understanding of the characteristics of self. McAdams' (1996) three levels of personality, or personhood, along with his concept of the personal narrative or life story (Adler & McAdams, 2007) served as the scaffolding for that perspective. Level One consists of personality traits; Level Two, of the person's

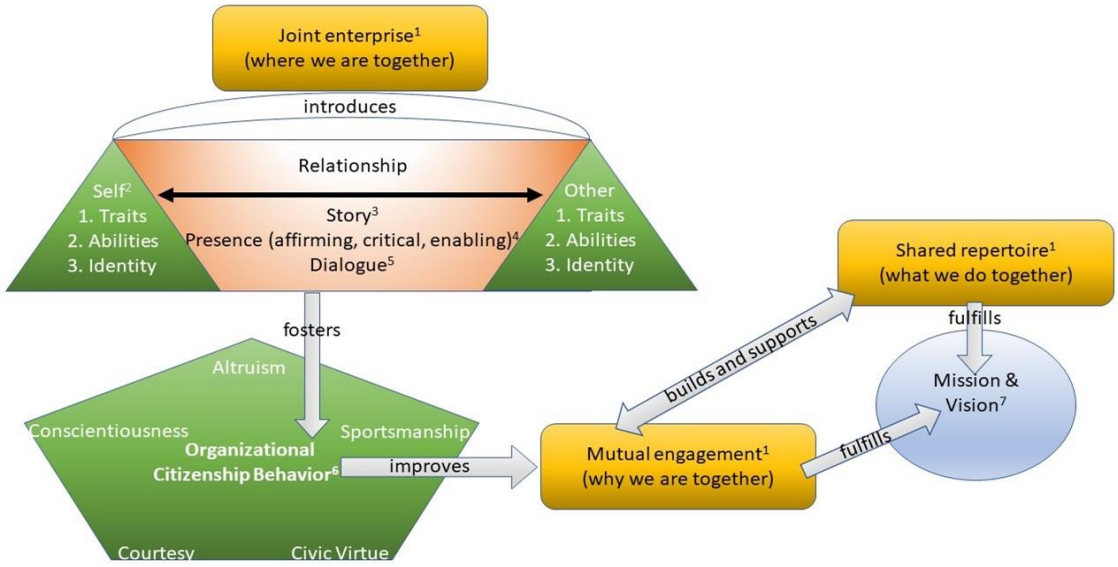
development, emotions, and abilities; and Level Three, of the person's identity and life story.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for the present study, shown in Figure 1, unites the theoretical frameworks of the community of practice and organizational citizenship behavior with an illustration of the dynamics of relationship, with mission and vision as an end goal. Persons in relationship are expressed as a dyad of self and other, each with three levels (McAdams, 1996). These individuals build relationship through sharing their life narratives (Adler & McAdams, 2007) and communicating with one another (Senge, 1990). These relationships are sustained through individuals' presence to each other. Starratt (2004) names three types of presence. The first, *affirming presence*, gives the other his or her subjectivity and dignity. *Critical presence* helps one to dialogue with another so that the two can overcome obstacles together. *Enabling presence* lets the other

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework: Togetherness for Mission



[1]Mercieca, 2017 [2]McAdams, 1996 [3]Adler & McAdams, 2007 [4]Starratt, 2004 [5]Senge, 1990 [6]Organ, 1988 [7]Dosen, 2016

use his or her talents and ideas to carry out the common mission of those working together. The well-established relationship leads community members to exhibit organizational citizenship behaviors, which are centered on the good of the other, whether the other is an individual or the institution (Organ, 1997). These behaviors improve how the community performs together to achieve its purpose – the mutual engagement aspect of the community of practice. Mutual engagement and shared repertoire support and build upon each other as the togetherness of the community leads to new strategies and practices that strengthen the community's cohesiveness when implemented successfully. In the end, both the community and the practice are meant to fulfill the mission and vision statements of the institution.

Significance of the Study

Defining and describing the ways that individuals work together within educational settings results in a new understanding of relationships that may be implemented by administrators and teachers to change the mindset within their institutions from one of isolation to one of togetherness. Administrators and teachers can potentially benefit from a new or refreshed spirit of working together centered upon relationships and the good of the other. This may, in turn, lead to more beneficial educational experiences for students because educators will have zeal for their work and will be better supported in their teaching. Knowing how to foster altruistic and service-oriented relationships among staff members will help administrators live up to the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders, which value "caring and trusting working relationships" (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015), as

well as Catholic educational standards such as the NSBECS (Ozar & Weitzel-O'Neill, 2012).

In order to carry out its educational mission and vision, an institution must be characterized by strong relationships. Involving every educator in a building in a shared vision for leadership enables them to collaborate toward achieving the mission. Vision informs structures and functions; therefore, vision must change before schedules, professional development, evaluation, and other programmatic elements shift out of a mindset of isolation (Berg, 2019). The present research analyzed the ways schools, as organizations, promoted and exhibited behaviors centered upon the good of others for the purpose of more complete mission fulfillment.

Isolation can be harmful to teacher performance and student success. Garza Mitchell and Parnther (2018) emphasized that educators need to share responsibility and have similar expectations for one another. Barth (2001) claimed that members of a community are responsible for the whole community. Teachers in isolation are missing their sense of responsibility toward one another. Their days at school are likely lackluster and lonely - just because teachers act alone, it does not necessarily mean that they want to; the culture may simply dictate this way of being. This can negatively affect the student success rate (Barth, 2001).

To combat isolation, leaders must take the initiative to include others in leadership and decision making. Brooke (2017) stated that leaders must allow teachers to come together and make decisions on instructional strategies based on research and data analysis conducted as a team. Involving teachers in decision-making is paramount to the success of a school because teachers have firsthand experience with their students and

how they learn, and can thus make decisions that enhance the productivity of their education, rather than simply taking directives from those with little to no knowledge of the daily goings-on in the classroom. Hargreaves & Fullan (2012) conceptualized this involvement as professional, social, and decisional capital, that is, the "wealth" that can be gained from coming together to make decisions. Fullan (2001) emphasized that relationships are connected to moral purpose and organizational success, and that a leadership style that centers relationships, working together, and concern for others can bring about success and even total reform.

Given the practical problems present in education resulting from individuals acting alone, the reasonable solution, as supported by previous research, appears to be rooted in bringing individuals together in one way or another. Existing studies separately provide prescriptions for leadership styles, ways for teachers to work together, and collaborative learning techniques (Birman et al., 2000; Tichnor-Wagner et al., 2016). Less common is literature that brings all of these together, describing a system of relationships as a mindset that all individuals in a school can follow. The present research aimed to provide such a description through observing and interviewing school personnel and distilling useful dynamics and ways of connecting. The present study serves as a foundation for further research on the underlying reasons for these behaviors.

Additionally, research on the topic of relationships often takes the approach of being focused on productivity, instruction, or cognitive processes (Daniels & Steres, 2011; Winters & Alexander, 2011). While these are, and will remain, important focuses for the analysis of educational relationships, the researcher here intended to produce a more human perspective on how and why people in schools come together,

complementing the literature with a new definition of togetherness that involves attitudes and behaviors in all parts of school life.

Connection with Vincentian Mission in Education

The present study relates well with the marks of the Vincentian charism of "compassion and zeal for service" (St. John's University, n.d.). Observing the lived experiences of individuals in relationship leads to an understanding of how well school staff members are geared toward service to one another. Only when educators can be brought out of themselves toward one another can they be able to foster a spirit of love, respect, and service to fulfill the mission of their institution together. These values are central to the Vincentian mission: the Vincentian congregation defines love as "an action for the corporate good," respect as "awareness and esteem for all," and service as "responding to the needs of others" (St. John's University, n. d.). These definitions align well with the behaviors the researcher sought to observe in the present study. In addition, since the study examined relationships and connections that help Catholic institutions fulfill their mission, comparisons could be drawn between the Vincentian mission and that of other Catholic congregations. For instance, the mission of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, or Lasallians after their founder John Baptist de la Salle, is to provide "a human and Christian education for the young, especially the poor" (Brothers of the Christian Schools, 2019). Therefore, encouraging deep relationships in Catholic schools such as those run by the Brothers has implications for social justice, as the very purpose of these schools is to help those less fortunate.

Research Questions

The purpose of the present study was to investigate and describe the relational dynamics of several Catholic secondary schools in a metropolitan area, and to examine how these relationships are used to fulfill the missions of these institutions. The study attempted to answer the following questions:

(1) How are relationships among administrators and teachers in a Catholic secondary school formed and maintained, as evidenced by organizational citizenship behaviors?

(2) In what ways do these relationships affect the practices that are aimed at fulfilling the school's mission?

Definition of Terms

Togetherness, aside from its dictionary definition of feelings of unity, is used to describe the system of relationship dynamics outlined in the conceptual framework.

The term *relationship* refers to the professional interpersonal dynamic that occurs through sharing life stories and presence to the other (Adler & McAdams, 2007; Starratt, 2004).

Community of practice is used to describe the paradigm of joint enterprise, mutual engagement, and shared repertoire as explained in the theoretical framework (Mercieca, 2017).

Organizational citizenship behavior includes altruism, conscientiousness, courtesy, civic virtue, and sportsmanship, as explained in the theoretical framework (Organ, 1988).

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The present study explored the characteristics of the dynamics of togetherness in educational settings as lived by teachers and administrators who aim to fulfill the mission of Catholic secondary schools. Chapter Two introduces the theoretical frameworks of communities of practice and organizational citizenship behavior in analyzing the context of togetherness. These frameworks underpin the organizational culture of a community in a state of togetherness and guide the school community to demonstrate behaviors conducive to working together.

Theoretical Framework

Communities of Practice

The theoretical framework of the community of practice (CoP) (Wenger, 1998) is composed of three facets: *joint enterprise*, *mutual engagement*, and *shared repertoire*. These have been given different names throughout the literature, such as domain, community, and practice (Mercieca, 2017). The CoP can be described as *where we are together, why we are together,* and *what we do together.* Related literature offered information on the elements that drive the community, and how community affects mission fulfillment.

Organizational Citizenship Behavior

Organizational citizenship behavior, or OCB (Organ, 1988), is a framework from the field of organizational theory that categorizes attitudes and actions that individuals display for the good of other individuals or of the organization. A metanalysis by Jahangir et al. (2004) lists the following antecedents, or influencing factors of OCB,

within an institution: job satisfaction, commitment, leadership behaviors, fairness, individual characteristics, motivation, and age of employees. Additionally, Burns and DiPaola (2013) highlight other features of OCB expressed in Organ's (1988) work: the behaviors do not necessarily correspond to specific expectable rewards and influence the function of the organization as a unit. Burns and DiPaola (2013, p. 6) also provide concrete examples of OCB in schools: "volunteering to serve on a school improvement committee, making innovative suggestions for improving the overall quality of the school, providing advance notice before taking personal leave, and giving up planning time or staying after school hours to tutor students." The antecedents of OCB were the basis of a body of literature, including the articles in the present review, that examines the types of behaviors in a school community that influence others to work together.

Table 1

Theoretical frameworks utilized in the present study on togetherness for mission in Catholic schools

Framework	*Constructs*	*Simple definitions*
Communities of practice (Wenger, 1998)	Joint enterprise	Reason for coming together
	Mutual engagement	Activities engaged in as a unit
	Shared repertoire	Techniques learned and practiced in community
Organizational citizenship behavior (Organ, 1988)	Altruism	Behaviors that help another person
	Conscientiousness	Attentiveness to one's work
	Courtesy	Behaviors that avoid conflict
	Civic virtue	Willingness to volunteer
	Sportsmanship	Avoiding complaining

These behaviors are examples that are discoverable in interviews and observations of a community in togetherness. A summary of the theoretical frameworks utilized in the present study can be seen in Table 1.

Review of Related Literature

Research on Organizational Citizenship Behavior

Behaviors exhibited by people acting separately and together around a certain individual influence whether that individual exhibits organizational citizenship behavior, and to what extent. Researchers have analyzed several of these influencing behaviors, known as antecedents of OCB, including behaviors of leaders and colleagues, individual perceptions and attitudes, and levels of commitment.

Quantitative work by Lin (2017) provided an analysis of OCB as a result of teachers' deliberative beliefs. The author defined these as beliefs in deliberation, which "considers different opinions and interests to reach commonalities or consensus by collective reasoning for the public good" (p. 189). Deliberative beliefs were split into one's personal beliefs about oneself and normative beliefs about society in general. A survey was given to 206 teachers from senior and vocational high schools in Taiwan. Personal deliberative beliefs and normative deliberative beliefs were positively correlated with OCB. The model of causal relationships between deliberative beliefs and OCB was also significant, $\chi^2 (< 3) = 2.42$, $p < .01$. Within this model, personal deliberative beliefs positively predicted OCB, where normative beliefs were not a significant predictor. This study had implications for the present study because it highlighted beliefs about the value of coming together to make decisions. The ability to deliberate with others, involving respecting opinions and relating to what others say, influenced OCB. According to Lin

(2017), this implies that encouraging deliberation increases the tendency to work for the good of others.

In addition to deliberative beliefs, other personal beliefs and factors affecting commitment were analyzed by several researchers. Elstad et al. (2011) conducted a quantitative study on how OCB was affected by teacher commitment, perceptions of economic exchange (working solely as a means of earning money) and social exchange (working for a sense of security), direct leadership, and relationships between teachers and leaders. Participants in this study were 366 teachers in folk, or culture-centered, secondary schools in Norway. Teachers took a Likert-scale survey that measured each of these variables, and the data were analyzed through structural equation modeling. The paths from direct leadership to commitment (β = -.024) and from leadership to economic exchange (β = -.248) were moderately negative, but the paths from relationship to commitment (β = .240) and to social exchange (β = .084) were positive (all $p < .000$). Economic exchange and leadership did not significantly affect OCB. The researchers conjectured from these results that monetary or leadership-based incentives did not affect OCB displayed by teachers. The results of this study contribute evidence for socioeconomic aspects of work that could influence an individual's desire to serve others. These include the idea that relationships of trust between leaders and teachers lead to better citizenship behaviors and help a school improve, and that trusting relationships increase commitment better than top-down leadership.

Similar to the 2011 study, Akar's (2018) quantitative study analyzed the effects on OCB of quality of life at work, feelings of alienation and burnout, and commitment. The participants included 314 public school teachers in Turkey. Likert-scale surveys were

used to measure each of the four dimensions. Correlational analysis demonstrated a weak and positive correlation between work life quality and organizational citizenship ($r = .37$, $p < .05$), moderately negative relationships between both alienation and burnout on citizenship ($r = -.48$, $r = -.52$, respectively, $p < .05$), and a moderate positive relationship between affective commitment and citizenship ($r = .67$, $p < .05$). Akar's results revealed how certain variables within an individual affected their organizational citizenship behavior. Avoiding feelings of burnout and alienation from others helped teachers give more of themselves to the school community than is required.

Lawrence et al. (2012) conducted a study to analyze the connection between perceptions of work on campus and organizational commitment, and between commitment and willingness to perform acts of service. The study took place in the context of higher education and challenged the assumption that service was not being done because of a lack of commitment. A survey was taken by 4,550 faculty members in American institutes of higher learning. The researchers also included gender, age, and years of experience as independent variables. Logistic regression was the main method of analysis. As a whole, the predictive model of the demographic and perception variables on organizational commitment was significant, $\chi^2 (21) = 117.2$, $\chi^2 (36) = 247.3$, $p = .05$. The variable of commitment was not found to have a significant effect on service. The model predicted a small percentage of variance in time spent on institutional activities, a function of OCB, $R^2 = .212$, $p = .05$. Perceptions of appreciative, respectful, and fair social exchanges between administrators and faculty were associated with higher levels of commitment, whereas job expectations influenced how an individual chose to do acts

of service. Feeling valued was essential to professors' decisions to remain at their institutions.

The study of organizational citizenship behavior would remain incomplete without a demonstration of the effects it has on student success. Recognizing a need for scholarship examining this, Burns and DiPaola (2013) conducted a study to analyze the connection between these two variables as well as the effect of organizational justice, or fairness in leadership, on OCB. The sample included 34 high schools in Virginia; the researchers considered the small sample as a limitation. The researchers utilized two Likert-scale surveys to measure organizational justice (Cronbach's alpha = .97) and OCB (validity confirmed by factor analysis). Organizational justice was strongly correlated with OCB ($r = .60$, $p < .01$). OCB was related to achievement in biology ($r = .57$, $p < .01$), reading ($r = .48$, $p < .01$), and writing ($r = .39$, $p < .05$). OCB significantly predicted achievement in biology ($\beta = .52$, $p < .01$) and reading ($\beta = .34$, $p < .05$) when SES was controlled for. Teachers' organizational citizenship behaviors were associated with higher test scores. These results make Burns' and DiPaola's study significant because it adds to the importance of OCB's effect on student achievement.

In summary, an individual's perceptions about work and relationships with others influence OCB. Leadership styles and behaviors also influence it. The theme of commitment repeated itself within the literature, suggesting that there is a process whereby relationships drive commitment, which leads individuals to work for the good of their organizations. OCB, in turn, has implications for student achievement and other measures of the fulfillment of a school's mission, including trust and the development of relationships.

Research on Trust and Relationships

Trust is a vital aspect of community and must be given and received by all parties involved to foster strong relationships. Administrators and teachers both have the responsibility of creating an atmosphere of trust. When this is successful, a trusting environment makes goals more reachable. Trust is built and maintained when professionals can reach one another on a human level, which in turn engenders a sense of well-being at the institution.

DeMatthews (2014) carried out a multi-case study of relationships within professional learning communities (PLCs) in six elementary schools in West Texas. Ten PLC meetings were observed in each school, and artifacts from those meetings were analyzed. Participants in each PLC were interviewed to gather a variety of perspectives. Results showed that staff felt supported and heard by leadership and that school culture embodied trust. Principals were supportive of teachers (from the principals' perspective) and knew when to let teachers nominate leaders and when to select leaders directly. Teachers spoke of PLCs as "where everyone comes together to solve problems, address concerns, and learn" (p. 189). Teacher leadership was found to be a key component in successful PLCs. DeMatthews' work provides an example of a study focusing on administrator-teacher relationships and the dynamics of togetherness in professional learning within and outside of PLC meetings.

Hallam et al. (2015) also conducted a multi-case study on the development of trust among principals and teachers in a PLC. The sample included four elementary and middle schools in the western United States. Six focus groups were conducted with fifth-grade teaching teams and six others with sixth-grade teams. Teachers stated that trust

developed from a willingness to share successes and struggles, and that trust enhanced openness about students and collaboration for instruction. Open communication and active listening contributed to trust within a PLC. Reliability and competence, together with autonomy given by the principal, increased an atmosphere of trust. Principals' trust in teachers, exhibited by granting them increased autonomy in instruction, helped teachers to feel valued and to succeed in educating their students. Hallam et al. (2015) considered the need for future longitudinal research and research in other school contexts.

Another study on trust was conducted by Angell et al. (2009), this time focusing on relationships between school and home. As a framework, the researchers utilized Tschannen-Moran and Hoy's (2000) five components of trust: benevolence, reliability, competence, honesty, and openness, as qualities one person believes about another. Sixteen mothers of students with disabilities were selected from across several school districts to participate in semi-structured interviews. Most mothers of students with disabilities expressed that in life, they trust until there is a reason not to. For others, trust of education professionals was "conditional or cautious" (p. 165). Caring shown by teachers to both children and parents was key in promoting trust. Clear and truthful communication by teachers was another key factor, as was level of training of teachers to provide special education. An interest in students with disabilities, nonjudgmental interactions within the school, and the degree of collaboration among school officials were some of the school factors that positively influenced trust. This study highlighted the interconnectedness of families, students, teachers, and administrators in a way that few studies do, and demonstrated the various ways in which trust can be increased.

Sutherland (2016) carried out a "multiple-source qualitative study" (p. 5) on trust in crisis recovery at a PreK-12 international institution in an island nation. The study was focused on how the school community recovered from a crisis, specifically the death of two sixth graders during a service-learning trip. Board members, administrators, faculty, parents, and staff were included. Documents of their meetings were analyzed following the crisis, and then thirteen focus groups were conducted with semi-structured interviews. Lastly, thirty individual interviews were conducted with stakeholders from the various groups. The researchers grouped recovery dynamics into two stages. In the Losing Trust stage, all decision-making power rested with the superintendent. There was little honestly in communication, as officials kept many details from stakeholders and the public, resulting in distorted information spread through rumors. In the Restoring Trust stage, the superintendent was replaced by a leadership team. The team encouraged collaboration and open, honest communication. Stakeholders could meet to work together and learn from one another, and efforts were made to teach the community how to work together. Thus, the school "learned and grew" from the crisis when togetherness was prioritized.

Stoloff, Boulanger, Lavallée, and Glaude-Roy (2020) found that relationships played a key role among the factors that underlay teachers' professional well-being. They conducted a qualitative study by induction on 37 physical education teachers from different regions in Québec. Data were gathered through focus groups. These factors found were grouped into "Self" and "Others". The "Self" factors included a sense of fulfillment, enthusiasm, energy, and enjoyment of the present moment – a "timelessness" of the day even "in a place where time is everywhere" (p. 20). The "Others" category included positive relationships with students, seeing students succeed and using what

they learn in daily life and relationships with colleagues and administrators that foster collaboration and support. Working well together was a sign of "professional well-being in teaching" (p. 26).

All in all, trust is fueled by open and clear communication and the willingness to share leadership responsibilities. As in any human relationship, trust in the educational setting is built on honesty and care for others. Trusting relationships are maintained when professionals recognize and appreciate one another's abilities. This leads to community members learning from one another and helping others achieve their goals.

Research on Communities of Practice

Communities of practice (CoP) can be operationalized as professional learning communities, but the framework is more expansive; it can also be used to describe other types of relationships in education. The elements of a CoP – joint enterprise, mutual engagement, and shared repertoire – are common among any subgroup within an organization or a set of organizations with a common mission. The ways that community is formed and maintained hinge on more than being together simply out of necessity.

Wennergren and Blossing (2017) conducted a case study of PLCs as communities of practice in an elementary school in Sweden. Interactions were analyzed according to the three aspects of a CoP. Eleven out of 42 teachers who demonstrated collaboration with students in the development of learning processes participated in semi-structured interviews. Regarding shared repertoire, teachers were found to have developed, together with the students, tools for teaching and learning, including lesson plans and assessments. In terms of mutual engagement, trust, belonging, and respect were highly valued in the

teacher-student relationship. Teachers who encouraged student participation explicitly experienced a greater sense of joint enterprise.

In another analysis of relationships between teachers, Samuel (2020) conducted a quantitative study of the effects of teaching experience on co-teachers' relationships in special education classrooms. Answers to the 32-question Likert scale survey known as the Tuckman Team Maturity Questionnaire were collected from 115 teachers who were involved in co-teaching. A multiple regression analysis was performed, and teachers who were dissatisfied with co-teaching tended to display less team-friendly behaviors (B = -5.23, $p < .001$). These teachers also did not perform well in practice with their partners in the classroom (B = -7.21, $p < .001$). The results implied that teachers who had positive attitudes toward working together were more likely to act in ways that unified their team and communicated better with one another, leading to more successful classroom performance as a unit.

Research that centers relationships aside from classroom teaching is also valuable. To examine the role of compassion, joy, and love in successful leadership, Cherkowski (2012) conducted a case study on a principal and two teachers in an elementary school in British Columbia, Canada. Observations, interviews, and participant journals were used to collect data. The principal's concern and care for the teachers as individuals helped bolster community. The teachers' human experiences, emotions, and personal life stories were welcomed into the school, leading to a willingness for professional growth and renewed commitment. The two teachers formed a friendship and supported each other personally and professionally. They felt energized by the support of the principal, who fostered a relationship with them that involved an emotional connection while

maintaining professionalism. Cherkowski claimed that the study was limited by the number of perspectives and their homogeneity, leaving a more varied study as a possible work of future research.

Hagan and Houchens (2016) developed a phenomenology on faculty meetings in a Catholic elementary school in Indiana, examining their effect on Catholic identity and academic achievement. Questionnaires, interviews, observations, and document analysis were used to gather data. These methods put together enhanced the trustworthiness of the study. The researchers observed that the meetings were a central piece in the community life of the school. Prayer was a valuable element of the meetings that brought the teachers together and established an atmosphere of support for one another, while confirming Catholic identity. The community was able to grow professionally, sharing instructional practices during meetings and planning for school improvement. Hagan and Houchens stated that an implication of their work was that it added to the literature on Catholic school faculty meetings that can be used to strengthen their cohesiveness and performance.

Expanding the scope of the community of practice beyond a single school, Huchting et al. (2017) conducted a case study of a consortium of three Catholic elementary schools in California to analyze its effectiveness and its exemplification of the elements of a CoP. Interviews and observations of individuals and groups were used to gather data. The schools formed a CoP in which the principals worked together in distributed leadership to enhance the marketing efforts and instructional life of the three schools. Their focus was on working together toward their common mission as Catholic schools, rather than competing against one another. Teachers were able to collaborate and

share instructional methods, and the schools lived out their Catholic faith together through liturgies and events that the principals planned together. Stakeholders believed that their Catholic identity was essential to the mission of the consortium.

Examining the function of communities of practice beyond K-12 education, Pyrko et al. (2017) carried out a grounded theory study of two departments in a healthcare facility in Scotland. The study consisted of 29 semi-structured interviews with health professionals in the two departments. One group deliberately and explicitly established a community of practice online to share knowledge and techniques. This was ineffective because individuals did not think contributing to the online database was worth their time. In contrast, the other group met in person, and senior practitioners mentored junior ones. Courses were taught, and discussions were held. This CoP developed and grew organically and because individuals could share knowledge, or "think together," it was highly effective. The researchers used Polanyi's (1966) concept of personal knowledge to build a theory of "thinking together" based on the observed group dynamics. Polanyi defined personal knowledge as the knowledge that people have within themselves that may or may not be expressible in words, and indwelling as the relationship of one's body and mind to the world through knowledge. "Thinking together" involves "interlocked indwelling" (p. 394) when persons share their knowledge about a situation with a common goal.

In summary, communities of practice are built by recognizing the humanness of the other person one works with and by sharing talents and perspectives. In a Catholic school, CoPs are held together by shared Catholic identity. Well-functioning CoPs, built on these human and spiritual values and the ability to "think together," not only improve

cohesiveness and belonging among members but also enhance the success of the organization as a unit in fulfilling its mission.

Research on Mission in Catholic Schools

Mission is the axis that Catholic education revolves around, and community drives its fulfillment. Catholic educators must be united toward the mission of the school so that both the educators and the whole organization can be successful. For a Catholic school community, the mission is not only educational success, but also spiritual and human formation and the passing on of values-centered upon love for God and others.

Analyzing a school that successfully lived out its mission, Striepe and O'Donohue (2014) carried out a case study of one K-12 Catholic school in Western Australia serving mostly low-income families. Seven administrators, including the principal, assistant principals, director of mission, director of finance, and academic dean, participated in semi-structured interviews related to their knowledge, understanding, and "practices of educational leadership" (p. 137). The leaders viewed servant leadership toward students, staff, and community as their vocation, and practiced leadership as a community in which relationships and "a common vision" were prioritized (p. 142). Keywords in describing the leadership role included building, modeling, being present, inspiring, and empowering (pp. 145-146). This study has implications for future research on Catholic schools in other parts of the world and can be connected with the ideas of presence and relationship with the other.

To examine the connection between Catholic identity and mission fulfillment, Cho (2012) conducted a quantitative study of 751 teachers from archdioceses across the USA that analyzed the effect of their faith on commitment to their school. Teachers were

surveyed on their Catholic faith and commitment. A sense of education as a ministry and of vocation influenced why teachers chose and remained in Catholic education. Religious reasons chiefly motivated 50.5% of Catholic teachers to work in Catholic schools. Relationship with God and an active faith life were significantly correlated with commitment to mission ($r = .593$ and $r = .729$, respectively; $p < .001$). For non-Catholic teachers, professional and academic goals and interests were the chief motivators for remaining in Catholic schools. Cho (2012) suggested that qualitative research be done to further explore this topic, which has implications for how teachers develop their faith and prayer life together as a school community.

Another quantitative analysis was conducted by Hobbie et al. (2013) on 138 Catholic elementary schools in the United States to examine the effect of Catholic identity on leadership and the effect of both of these on school vitality. School vitality was defined as the readiness of a school to fulfill its mission and its ability to plan for the future. Surveys were given to teachers to measure Catholic school identity, organizational leadership, and school vitality, with Cronbach's alpha values ranging from .83 to .96. Multiple regression analysis showed that Catholic school identity significantly contributed to school vitality in terms of teacher affiliation with the school ($\beta = .277$, $p = .002$), emphasis on academics ($\beta = .378$, $p < .001$), organizational function ($\beta = .231$, $p = .008$), and collective efficacy ($\beta = .325$, $p = .002$). Organizational leadership was a more significant predictor than Catholic identity with respect to vitality in the areas of organizational function ($\beta = .519$, $p < .001$) and teacher affiliation ($\beta = .464$, $p = .002$). Other conclusions showed that vitality was influenced by leadership behaviors consistent with the Catholic mission, including support of teachers and stewardship of funds. The

researchers list bias originating from self-reporting and common variance among some of the variables as limitations of the study.

As a historical example of a Catholic institution working together to achieve its mission, Tidd (2009) utilized archival research techniques to put together an ethnography of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, also known as Lasallians. The study included key moments of the development of the Brothers and their mission, including committing to share the mission with laypeople. This was a two-part study of which the second part was more relevant to the present research. Tidd's study detailed the foundational documents and programs that resulted from and furthered the effort of the Brothers to instill a spirit of shared mission in their order. Shared mission became part of the Brothers' rule of life in 1987, extending the educational vocation of the order to laypeople. This was operationalized in various formation and community-building programs for lay educators in order to create "the Lasallian family" (p. 442). These programs, which began in the 1980s and 1990s, are still well-attended by Lasallian educators today. The ethnographer also included the struggles with redefining the concept of "association" from Brothers only to Brothers and partners within the "Lasallian family," including the reconceptualization of relationships between educators from having the Brothers in positions of authority toward equality between Brothers and lay partners.

A concrete example of the work of the early Brothers of the Christian Schools is found in the work of Valadez (2019). He utilized phenomenology to study a Brothers' high school in California. He included interviews from graduates and current and former faculty members and administrators, along with archival data. The researcher investigated

how the mission of the Brothers influenced the lives of those who worked in or attended the school. The mission instilled in those affiliated with the school an appreciation for the Brothers and their vocation to service. The Brothers' zeal for their missionary calling stayed with their students into adulthood. A commitment to serving the poor was another value still practiced by graduates who became teachers and administrators at the school, taking the form of raising funds for financial aid for current students who lived in poverty. A love of community and a desire to give back to the community by teaching or helping in other ways was present in most of the individuals interviewed. Valadez (2019) claimed that his study and others have implications for proving the success of Catholic schools so that they remain alive in the face of the financial hardships of both families and governments.

Altogether, mission is driven by leaders and sustained by the whole school community. Catholic identity, as expressed by community prayer and other means, make mission a steady focus in the life of a Catholic school. The successful fulfillment of the mission is evident, among other ways, in the way people carry on the school's traditions by answering a vocational call to teaching or another form of service.

Summary

The present review of literature explains some of the influencing factors of community togetherness and demonstrates why it is important based on the lived experiences of educators from a variety of geographical and institutional backgrounds. This chapter discussed the elements on which togetherness is built and the value it has for the fulfillment of a school's mission. The following chapter explains how the researcher explored the lived experiences of togetherness and their effect on Catholic school

communities' capability to fulfill their institutional missions and common Catholic mission.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

The purpose of the present study was to investigate and describe the professional relationships among educators in private Catholic high schools and to analyze how these relationships led to mission fulfillment. This analysis was built on the theoretical frameworks of the community of practice (Wenger, 1998 in Mercieca, 2017) and organizational citizenship behavior (Organ, 1988), as explained in Chapter One. A review of related literature, laid out in Chapter Two, emphasized how Catholic faith identity and recognizing the humanness of others are important to the success of Catholic schools. In addition, the literature stated that trust is essential among teachers and leaders, and that efforts to live out a school's mission are sustained by the entire community working together. In order to describe these phenomena in two Catholic schools, the researcher utilized the qualitative methodology of the multiple exploratory case study (Yin, 2018) in order to learn from the lived experience of teachers and administrators. Chapter Three details the methodological features of the present study and explains the researcher's positionality in relation to the topic of the study.

Methodology

A case study methodology was chosen for this design because this method is suitable for answering questions about a phenomenon occurring in its natural environment, or context, especially when phenomenon and context are not easily distinguishable from one another (Yin, 2018). The phenomenon of togetherness for mission cannot be studied outside of the institutions engaged in mission fulfillment. Also, case study involves at least three different sources of data (in the present study,

interviews, observations, and content analysis), which lead to a rich description of the phenomenon being analyzed (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006). The case study to be carried out in the present dissertation can be classified as sociological because it focuses on interpersonal relationships; intrinsic because it uses specific organizations as a sample, and descriptive since it aims to illustrate relational dynamics as they are being lived (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006).

Methods and Procedures

Research Questions

Case study methodology is suitable for questions surrounding the processes behind organizational dynamics (Yin, 2018). The present study will attempt to answer the following questions:

(1) How are relationships among administrators and teachers in a Catholic secondary school formed and maintained, as evidenced by organizational citizenship behaviors?

(2) In what ways do these relationships affect the practices that are aimed at fulfilling the school's mission?

Setting

This study focused on two Catholic high schools located in a large city in the northeastern United States. The schools are part of a group of sixteen schools that exist within a single diocese, or region of Catholic Church jurisdiction. Even though they are privately operated by religious congregations and/or boards of governors, the sixteen principals meet several times a year to share best practices and policies. The researcher has delimited this study to Catholic schools, where an atmosphere of togetherness,

however informally defined, is central to school culture, and where school mission statements share Catholic values in common (Ozar & Weitzel-O'Neill, 2012). Additionally, the researcher selected to study secondary schools because their generally larger size, compared to K-8 schools in the diocese, makes a concerted effort necessary to create and maintain relationships.

The first school, given the pseudonym Ascension of the Lord High School (ALHS), was founded in 1858 by the Franciscan Brothers. It educates approximately 2,400 students in grades nine through twelve and boasts a 100% graduation rate and a 99% college attendance rate. The school is led by a president who is a Franciscan brother and a lay principal who is an alumnus, along with four assistant principals. There are approximately 140 faculty and staff members (67.9% female, 32.1% male), of whom three are members of religious congregations and the rest laypersons.

The second school, given the pseudonym Our Lady of Life High School (OLLHS), was founded in 1892 by the Marist Brothers. It educates approximately 1,500 young men and women in grades nine through twelve and has a 100% rate of both graduation and college attendance. The school is led by a lay president who is an alumnus, a lay principal, and four assistant principals. There are approximately 110 faculty and staff members (42.7% female, 57.3% male). Five educators are Marist Brothers and the rest are laypersons.

The researcher first sent out emails to principals of four high schools within the diocese asking for permission to possibly conduct the study at their schools. The email (Appendix A) included a brief explanation of the dissertation topic and methods. The schools were chosen based on perceived reputation for excellence and approximate size

of the faculty. There was a general lack of willingness to grant access. One principal did not respond, another denied access explicitly, and a third hesitated to grant permission and then ceased to respond. The researcher leveraged a connection with a principal from his time in the doctoral program to gain access to one of the schools. To access a second data source, the researcher leveraged his relationship with his current employer, who happily allowed data gathering at his school. Realizing the principals' role as "formal gatekeepers" to the data able to be gathered from their schools (Seidman, 2006, p. 43), upon gaining approval from the Institutional Review Board (Appendix B), the researcher arranged a meeting with the principals to provide additional details about the project, to establish interview and observation participants and dates, and to discuss the documents needed for content analysis. Letters of informed consent (Appendix C) were given to those involved in the data gathering process. After the initial details, such as interview and observation times and subjects, were established, the researcher accessed the site, respecting each school's and St. John's University's established precautions during the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

The researcher, a teacher in one of the Catholic schools from which he is gathering data, recognized his bias toward the topic of the present study and toward the schools involved. To mitigate this, he interviewed people in different roles to obtain different perspectives. The researcher employed member checking throughout the interview process to ensure fidelity to the perspectives being addressed. This was especially important if the researcher interviewed someone he knew even superficially (Johnson, 1997).

Participants

As previously stated, the researcher has chosen to delimit the present study to Catholic high schools because of the unique ways in which community life is lived in those institutions. Convenience sampling by gathering data from schools where the researcher has professional connections can be justified in that Catholic schools are relatively homogenous in the life stories of their faculties (Robinson, 2014). The two sample schools have good reputations, consistent expression of Catholic identity, and high academic achievement. From each of these two institutions, the principal, other administrators, and faculty members were selected for interviews, since related literature (Huchting et al., 2017) suggests that well-formed community involves leadership and faculty equally. Information about the interview participants is found in Table 2.

Table 2

Interview Participants

Pseudonym	*Role and School*	*Years at School*
John	Principal, ALHS	30 (8 as principal)
James	Asst. Principal for Curriculum, ALHS	38 (26 as A.P.)
Anna	Guidance Chairperson, ALHS	20
Lisa	Science Teacher, ALHS	9
Zach	President, OLLHS	11
Andrew	Principal, OLLHS	6
Matthew	Asst. Principal for Scheduling, OLLHS	1
Frank	Asst. Principal for Instruction & Mission, OLLHS	17 (10 as A.P.)
Peter	World Language Teacher, OLLHS	43
Thomas	Guidance Chairperson, OLLHS	23 (8 as chair)
Mark	College Guidance Counselor, OLLHS	18

Data Collection

Data collection took approximately three months. Methods included semi-structured interviews and observations along with content analysis. All interviewees and those being observed were provided with a letter of informed consent stating the purpose of the study and how data were gathered from participants, along with explaining the voluntary nature of the study and confidentiality of data.

Interviews in the form of guided conversations were the main data source in the present case study, as suggested by Yin (2018). Interviews were semi-structured to allow for some flexibility in conversation, leading to richer interview data (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Relationships are best described by the people living in them; thus, interviewing was an obvious choice of method because perspectives could be gathered and meaning verified in conversation that yields specific examples of lived experiences (Kvale, 2008). The aim of these interviews was to create a description of how relationships were lived out in the educational setting (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). The interviews themselves were relational (Seidman, 2006) in that the other persons were recognized as valuable others with stories to tell. In avoiding personal bias, the researcher kept in mind that the relationships were to be maintained as "I and you" and not as a real "we", (Seidman, 2006, p. 96) though the interviewer and interviewee were often part of the same institution.

The researcher interviewed the president, the principal, two assistant principals, two guidance counselors, and a teacher from OLLHS and the principal, one assistant principal, the guidance director and a science teacher from ALHS. Each one-on-one interview lasted between thirty and sixty minutes. Interviews were conducted with the

assurance of privacy (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006), and were recorded via the Zoom videoconferencing application. Interviews were transcribed using the Otter transcription application. The researcher utilized an interview protocol (Appendix D) of eight questions partially based on work on professional learning communities by Liebman, Maldonado, Lacey, and Thompson (2005). This aligned with the motivation of the present study to go beyond the PLC as the operationalization of togetherness. The interview protocol was designed to gain evidence in the form of stories; four questions were about how individuals exhibited organizational citizenship behaviors such as helping one another and avoiding conflict, while four questions dealt with how educators came together as a community of practice. A table indicating the connections between interview questions, research questions, and theory can be found in Appendix E.

In addition, the researcher utilized observation as a method of data gathering. This method is recommended as an addition to interviewing in studying the organizational setting (Yin, 2018). The way people relate to one another is generally apparent from watching and listening to their interactions. Body language, emotion, and spoken language are all ways by which people convey to one another how each feels about the other. Observation is useful because it allows the researcher to study relationships as they are being lived (as opposed to thought about, as in an interview), which lends itself to a deeper, objective understanding of what is really happening (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006). In an observation, a researcher has the opportunity to witness on-the-spot communication in real time and can take note of reactions that may not happen when someone has more time to think about a situation. The researcher observed activities in which faculty and administrators worked in community, namely one meeting of

administrators and department chairs and one meeting of the president with development and communications officers. Observations followed a protocol (Appendix F), and notes were typed and coded.

A third method employed was content analysis, often used to support data gathered through interviews and participant observation (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Yin, 2018). The content analyzed included documents that were typically referred to yearly by different groups within the community and were codifications of relationships within school culture, such as mission and vision statements, admissions brochures, and staff and student newsletters. Additionally, the researcher examined accreditation documents related to Catholic identity and mission and articles and online content that demonstrated life in community.

Table 3

Summary of Content Analysis

School	*Type of Content*	*Number of Items*
ALHS	Accreditation Document	1
	Mission Statement	1
	Newsletter	2
	Open House Booklet	1
	PLC Guidelines	1
	Principal's Letter	1
	Reopening Plan	1
OLLHS	Admissions Brochure	1
	Faculty Newsletter	4
	School Newspaper	1
	Strategic Plan Summary	1

A summary of the content analysis is displayed in Table 3, while a guide for content analysis can be found in Appendix G. The researcher asked each principal for access to content that was not publicly available.

Preliminary access to the research sites was gained in September of 2020. The researcher applied for Institutional Review Board approval after the proposal defense in late October, with approval granted in late November. Data gathering, and as much as possible, simultaneous analysis, occurred from December through March. Drafting and revising of the narrative took place in March and April 2021.

Trustworthiness

The researcher ensured credibility by gaining familiarity with the research sites and their organizational culture early in the project. Additionally, credibility was enforced by triangulation of data gained from administrators, faculty members, and content analysis. The researcher helped the informants give honest answers by ensuring their comfort and the confidentiality of the interviews. To the extent possible for a qualitative study, transferability was enforced by carefully providing details about the research sites and generating a thick description to delimit comparisons to other sites or types of communities. Dependability was increased because the researcher provided an audit trail that details the research process. Confirmability resulted from the researcher's reflective commentary and recognition of his positionality (Shenton, 2004). Descriptive validity was ensured through member checking (Creswell & Poth, 2016) of the contributions of each interviewer to ensure accuracy. The form of the email sent to participants can be seen in Appendix H. Theoretical validity was assured by using the theoretical frameworks in Chapter One as guidelines for analysis.

Research Ethics

Permission to access the site and the necessary people and events was obtained through the principal of each school. The researcher selected other interviewees with the help of the principals. All interviewees and those observed received a letter of informed consent delineating the voluntary nature of participation and assuring confidentiality.

Interviews were conducted with each person seated in a private location, either an office or classroom, to ensure confidentiality. Interview recordings were kept securely through password protection. Observation notes were handwritten and later typed by the researcher. Content analysis, along with all other coding, was conducted within the Dedoose coding application and organized in Microsoft Excel. Reflective notes as part of the coding process were handwritten. Handwritten notes were destroyed once digital versions are created. All audio files, transcripts, and notes were password-protected in the researcher's account within the university's licensed use of Microsoft OneDrive. Individuals and schools were given pseudonyms. The researcher did not share raw data with anyone other than the dissertation advisor, except for member checking with the person(s) from whom the data originated.

Data Analysis Approach

First, open coding was used to pinpoint themes by grouping individual pieces of data from interviews, observations, and content analysis into categories and subcategories. This stage was done simultaneously with data collection. It included broad classifications and generated seventeen codes within the Dedoose application (Appendix I). A second cycle of coding, also simultaneous with data collection, helped to further determine the nuances in behaviors and attitudes among the participants. For this stage,

the researcher employed emergent coding techniques supplemented by value, attitude, and behavior codes (Saldaña, 2013). These codes aligned with the study's purpose and theoretical framework because the codes emphasized interpersonal dynamics. The researcher read through and reflected upon the data several times to be sure all relevant data were coded. Sixty-four codes were generated in this cycle (Appendix I). In a third cycle after data collection was complete, pattern coding (Saldaña, 2013) was utilized to classify the data into themes and subthemes. These outlined the causes or influences, actions and interactions, contexts, and outcomes of the different components of the phenomenon of togetherness. In order to group data into themes, the researcher reflected upon the patterns in the data and used Microsoft Excel to color-code data cells and sort them by qualitative code. Coding cycles were repeated until saturation was reached (Saldaña, 2013). The researcher aligned the data to the research questions, theoretical framework, and themes from the review of related literature, and triangulated data gathered from administrators, faculty, and content analysis by examining how they complemented one another.

Researcher Role

The researcher is interested in Catholic schools because of his own involvement in them throughout his life. He is an alumnus of a Catholic grammar school of which he is chairman of the board of trustees. He is also an alumnus of the Catholic high school where he now teaches, and is a doctoral student at a Catholic university. The result of years of Catholic education was conversion to the Catholic faith and an espousal of its tenets of service and living for others, thus the researcher's interest in togetherness as a social phenomenon. The researcher's "nonresearch human" self was activated because of

these personal convictions, lessening the distance between him and the participants (Peshkin, 1988, p. 18). The researcher plainly had an emic, or integrated, perspective (Peshkin, 1988) and thus was careful not to integrate bias into data analysis since the purpose of this project was to describe the phenomenon as it exists in the lives of those being observed. The researcher was sure to keep bias in check throughout the research process, including steadily reflecting on positionality.

Additionally, because the diocese can be a close-knit community, the researcher was careful to make the participants aware of the confidential nature of the interviews and observations and reassured the participants that they would not be judged if discord exists between individuals or systems in their schools.

Summary

The present dissertation utilized a qualitative case study methodology including interviews, observations, and content analysis to gather data from two school communities in order to answer questions about the formation of relationships and how togetherness enables mission fulfillment. The data were coded with the goal of identifying themes that were used to create a unified description of the phenomenon of togetherness in Catholic secondary schools based on genuine lived experiences and artifacts that demonstrated how mission was lived.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

As stated in Chapter One, the purpose of the present study was to investigate how professional relationships are formed and maintained by administrators and teachers in Catholic secondary schools and how these relationships support mission fulfillment in these schools. Chapter Two provided a review of the related literature on relational dynamics such as trust and community cohesion. The researcher conducted a multiple exploratory case study (Yin, 2018) of two Catholic high schools in a northeastern United States metropolis. In this document, the schools are given the pseudonyms Ascension of the Lord High School (ALHS) and Our Lady of Life High School (OLLHS).

Research methods were described in Chapter Three. Qualitative data were gathered through individual semi-structured interviews, observations of meetings, and content analysis. At ALHS, the researcher interviewed the principal, an assistant principal, the guidance director, and a science teacher, and analyzed communications to students, a professional learning community (PLC) plan, the reopening plan in the face of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, mission and accreditation documents, and admissions materials. At OLLHS, the researcher interviewed the president, principal, two assistant principals, the guidance director, another guidance counselor, and a world language teacher. The researcher observed a routine meeting of administrators and department chairpersons and a meeting of the president with the alumni development officers. Documents similar to those of the other school were analyzed. The gathered data supported two units of analysis (Yin, 2018): administrators and faculty. Data from interviews were complemented by data from observations and content analysis.

Using three cycles of coding, the researcher separated the data into three themes: concern for others, educators functioning as a family, and the presence of mission in all aspects of school life. Each theme had two to three subthemes. A summary of the thematic units and data sources is found in Table 4.

Table 4

Thematic Elements and Data Sources

Theme	*Subthemes*	*Data Sources*	*Trustworthiness*
Concern for others	Educators willingly help others; Educators work between and across departments; Community members give back	Interviews, observations, content analysis	Member checking
Educators function as a family	A sense of belonging; Communication helps the family function	Interviews, observations, content analysis	Member checking
Mission in all aspects of school life	Catholic identity characterizes school life; Mission as a unifying factor; Education goes beyond academics	Interviews, observations, content analysis	Member checking

The first theme deals with the ways that concern for others led individuals in school communities to help and support one another. Within this theme, the data suggested that educators customarily displayed altruism toward their colleagues in both job-related and non-job-related circumstances. Work with others took place both within and across departments, as exemplified by PLCs and committee work. In addition, as a mark of the lasting impact of care for others as a community value, alumni gave back to

their schools. Some did this by returning to work at the schools when given the opportunity, while others contributed financially.

The second major theme in the present study is that educators at ALHS and OLLHS function as a family. In conceptualizing this theme, the researcher examined how educators experienced a sense of belonging to their school community as evidenced by professional and social bonding, love and appreciation for one another, and the ways people sought out community life amidst the isolation forced upon them by pandemic safety precautions. The theme also includes how communication between members of the school family helped in decision making and the mediation and resolution of conflict.

The final theme relates to mission fulfillment in different areas of school life. Within this theme, the researcher analyzed how Catholic identity was lived out through both formal traditions and daily habits of individuals and groups. The ways mission unified people and mission's centrality in school life appear in this theme. Lastly, the fulfillment of the common mission of Catholic schools to educate each young person in spirit and body as well as in intellect is discussed.

The present chapter reflects data gathered during an academic year when the sample institutions' lives had been drastically altered by the restrictions placed upon them due to the coronavirus pandemic that began in March of 2020. The researcher recognized and anticipated the challenges of studying the phenomenon of togetherness in a time of extreme social isolation. The schools involved in this study had to temporarily eliminate many of the ways educators gather professionally and spiritually, and individuals expressed a desire to speedily return to normal life. Teachers and administrators offered contrasts between life before and during the pandemic. The present study was itself

limited by the pandemic, as demands on teachers to modify instruction for a hybrid setting and on administrators to keep up with rapidly changing scenarios limited their availability and thus their willingness to participate. Given that the researcher is a member of the faculty at one institution and given the natural team spirit present within the school, others there were more willing to give of their time and knowledge. Altogether, though, the researcher was able to gain insight into the relational dynamics at each school, which were cohesive, mission-driven, faith-filled, and family oriented. Though the majority of the data came from interviews, the observations and document analysis were valuable because they provided further support for the ways interviewees described their lived experiences.

Findings

Theme 1: Concern for Others

Administrators and faculty members at the two Catholic schools in the present study demonstrated concern for one another. This value is central to the cultures of both schools and takes a variety of forms. There exists a willingness to help others without the anticipation of personal gain, whether the situation is related to one's daily job duties or not. Willingness to support others lends itself to cohesive academic and administrative departments and committees that include members of different departments. This has been more necessary than usual in the school year affected by the coronavirus pandemic. School staff and leadership come together in ways that benefit instructional and non-instructional aspects of school life. A community living in togetherness in these ways in turn engenders a sense of loyalty that stays with staff members and alumni, leading them to give back to their community by the work they do and through financial support.

Phrases from interviewees that capture this theme include “labor of love,” “individuals giving of themselves,” and “collaborative culture.”

Subtheme A: Educators Willingly Help Others

The educators at ALHS and OLLHS help others in different ways, both within and outside of their typical job descriptions. Altruism is valued in both schools, as it was highlighted in printed materials for both the community and faculty. James, the assistant principal for curriculum at ALHS, stated with conviction that “in a Catholic school, one of the things about the culture is that…we’re always expected to do something else, to go above and beyond.” Most interviewees provided several concrete examples of how this value was lived. Job-related help to others, both students and fellow educators, took several forms. The most routine example was when teachers came to school early or stayed after classes to provide extra help to their students. Thomas, the guidance chairperson at OLLHS, discussed the amount of time that went into providing a sincere, unique letter of recommendation for each twelfth grader applying to college. He highlighted that these two modes of help were not part of teachers’ or counselors’ contractual responsibilities, yet educators still went out of their way to provide these services to the students. Assistant principal Frank, also from OLLHS, mentioned the time he takes to speak to students who come to his office at random times because they need help with academic or personal concerns and want to feel less alone.

The pandemic brought altruism to the work lives of educators as well. Lisa, a science teacher at ALHS, helped her colleagues to understand and operate the new technologies being used to deliver instruction in remote or hybrid formats. At OLLHS, the need to quarantine teachers who were potentially exposed to the coronavirus made

numerous class coverages necessary. This reached a high point of about 180 total substitutions (teachers assigned to cover for others during an unscheduled period) in a week. Frank, in charge of assigning these coverages, was impressed that teachers volunteered to give up their free periods instead of simply waiting to be assigned. More striking to him was that those teachers who taught a full load of five periods a day still volunteered to substitute:

> You kind of put up the smoke signal and people [say]: “Hey, listen, give me give me another class too, doesn't matter.” Even if they're teaching a full load, people have been willing, even those who usually do not get replacements. And it's not written into the contract or whatever. They don't have replacements, but they come in to say "Just give me what you need. I'm available.” I take heart in that. And I think that speaks to the atmosphere of the school – people want to help.

Frank also displayed compassion for others when he allowed a teacher to take leave due to a family emergency. The teacher was not pressured to leave daily assignments for his students or to teach remotely each day. Easing the burden on this teacher allowed him attend to his ailing family member.

Altruism in non-job-related circumstances showed itself when teachers volunteered to help their colleagues host virtual events to provide community to students who felt isolated due to the restrictions of learning remotely or in small cohorts. Teachers also stepped up to help the admissions department at OLLHS conduct virtual outreach to families who registered their children as first-year students for the upcoming school year. In a typical school year, teachers would also give of their time to organize and work at camps and sporting events for students and to plan social gatherings for staff.

A repeated idea in the data on helpful behaviors was that of giving up one's free time. Anna, the guidance chairperson at ALHS, noted that the mental and personal needs of her students caused her work hours to stretch far past the normal end of the school day:

> Every day at work, I speak to parents at all hours, and students – now there are no boundaries because of COVID. So, my day doesn't end at 2:30 – it ends at never. I meet kids and parents that are only available to talk after school, or at night, at dinner time and weekends, and I've had many, very many zoom or virtual meetings with parents after school… It starts at eight. And it goes until midnight, and starts again at 7:30 in the morning, especially with parents that are working from home and have to help their kids do things after school. And yes, it's every day.

Anna noted that she does not hold her department to such an extreme extension of the workday, but she said that others do give of their time and that such a disposition is necessary to do the job well.

At OLLHS, principal Andrew and academic assistant principal Matthew also discussed giving extra time to their work. Andrew mentioned that he and the administrative team often work during weekends to ensure the smooth operation of the building so that teachers can do their jobs efficiently. Matthew, who was hired in the spring of 2020 and would officially begin work in September, enthusiastically took on duties in the intervening summer. He used his data organization skills to separate students into cohorts based on preferences for remote or hybrid learning and health guidelines from the state.

Faculty also give of their time to run extracurricular events and service trips together. Veteran OLLHS language teacher Peter discussed how the annual cultural performance and food festival he instituted about forty years ago traditionally involved the cooperation of club moderators, teachers, and administrators together with parents and students. Thomas told about how he started a service program that runs mission trips to developing nations and American cities devastated by natural disasters. This program was successful because of the cooperation of many staff members organizing travel, chaperoning students, and contributing their labor to the charitable work being done. Faculty members often had to curtail their involvement when they started their own families, but still gave time to events and service efforts whenever they could.

At these two schools, teachers give of themselves without expecting remuneration. The service trips, class coverages, and event planning did not result in extra pay, yet individuals still gave of themselves willingly. Administrators indicated that other administrators and faculty were especially quick to take up the job responsibilities of another who was sick or in distress, with or without payment for the extra work. Likewise, administrators at both schools were willing to help their faculty members and listen to their concerns. Educators' willingness to help one another demonstrated their genuine care and concern for their colleagues.

Subtheme B: Intra- and Inter-Departmental Work Together

Educators at ALHS and OLLHS demonstrated beliefs and practices that allowed for strong professional bonds both within and across departments. Commitment to work was a key value espoused by many, with most of ALHS's focus being around instruction. Lisa at ALHS said that her duties as coordinator of the science research program, in

addition to teaching a full load of classes, may be seen by others as being above and beyond normal responsibilities, but for her, they are part of her job and need to be carried out well. Likewise, Thomas at OLLHS mentioned that organizing and participating in service trips and other school events is something he "owes" out of loyalty to the school. Principal Andrew talked about the commitment of his administrative team members to their duties and to one another, recounting how an administrator with an ailing wife did as much work as he possibly could until he had to take leave to attend to her. From that point on, his colleagues adeptly took on his responsibilities. Additionally, Andrew stated that the teachers are committed to their students and to modeling preparedness and Catholic values in the classroom. ALHS assistant principal James brought up that his school codified the value of commitment into a faculty commitment policy, which detailed what it meant to be dedicated to "the profession, the school community, and the students."

Mark, a college guidance counselor at OLLHS, told of how his department maintains constant communication about happenings with students and collaborates to ensure students' needs are met. The department routinely shares both successes and concerns with administration. Assistant principal Frank mentioned how a routine activity such as grading state exams naturally brings a department together to complete the task in a short time frame. At ALHS, Lisa detailed how her science department members share ideas about classroom and laboratory instruction and how a committee within the department came together to develop a new environmental science curriculum. James said that the English department also operates in constant communication.

A key way faculty members interact across departments at ALHS is through professional learning communities (PLCs). The principal instituted the PLC structure a few years ago to "focus on talking about instruction". During these meetings, teachers share and comment on one another's lessons while following conversation guidelines that ensure attention and respect toward their colleagues. The principal and assistant principal both emphasized that PLCs gave faculty members who would not otherwise work together a chance to learn from one another. Widening the circle of interaction, guidance chair Anna spoke of professional development days that ALHS faculty attended with other faculties from two city boroughs.

Committee work is another way educators at the two schools usually collaborate. Administrators from both schools discussed successful committee projects in such efforts as restructuring the annual open house event, strategic planning, developing policies for students, and helping students in financial need caused by natural disasters such as Hurricane Sandy in 2012. These efforts brought together administrators, guidance counselors, the finance and admissions departments, and faculty members and necessitated constant communication and compromise. Committee work was especially important during the summer of 2020 to plan the safe reopening of schools amid pandemic restrictions. Teachers, counselors, administrators, the nurse, security guards, and facilities staff of each school developed intricate reopening plans to maximize instructional capabilities in a safe and welcoming environment. The pandemic has also given teachers more reasons to work together to plan for instruction. Peter explained:

> Over the course of the last year with COVID, I have probably seen more interaction and cooperation among the peers in the language department… than

> any other time in my 43 years here. Because we taught ourselves together. It was, you know, [a French teacher] teaching me one thing, and I in turn felt very proud that I could teach her and [a Spanish teacher] another thing. And then [an Italian teacher] was right there every day for me.

The educators at both schools came together effectively to face difficulties and meet needs with one another's help and input. Their other-centeredness, as opposed to self-centeredness, facilitated cooperation both within and across departments.

Subtheme C: Community Members Give Back

Another facet of how members of school communities demonstrate care and love for one another is the significant impact of alumni who give back to their school. Content analyzed from both schools listed the activity of alumni in teaching, coaching, and financial support as a valued trait of the school community. The publicized strategic plan summary document of OLLHS discussed how alumni served on steering committees to help formulate the plan. Also, the newly-formed diversity council at the school includes several alumni, some of whom also work at the school. Of the eleven individuals interviewed for the present study, five are alumni of their schools: the president, assistant principal for academics, guidance chair, and counselor at OLLHS and the principal of ALHS. It was evident from each of them how their experiences as students led them to pursue positions at their alma maters and help educate the next generation. Matthew at OLLHS sincerely explained:

> I'm happy to know that I'm back serving my alma mater, and I enjoy it. It's a really, really great place to be and I'm happy that we're grounded in something that's unique. It's Catholic. Many Catholic schools are out there, but the Marist

Brothers are something special, something unique, you know, because of [founder, Saint] Marcellin Champagnat and everything that that flows from that. Matthew, who graduated from OLLHS in the 1990s and worked for twenty years in public schools, sought the community and traditions his former workplace lacked.

Alumni who do not work at their alma maters also stay involved through the efforts of longstanding community members on staff. Peter related that his former students and others who recognize him by his blue and white school athletic apparel are inspired to reconnect after sharing good memories of school days. OLLHS president Zach mentioned that his alumni development office leverages connections with graduates who are established in their fields to provide internships to current students or more recent alumni. While observing a routine meeting of this office, the researcher learned that an outreach effort was underway to help alumni and parents of current students who owned restaurants that were in hardship because of COVID-19 restrictions.

One of the most significant ways alumni give back is by donating to scholarships named in honor of famous graduates or longstanding faculty members. OLLHS guidance counselor Mark, who is an alumnus, told of how he created a scholarship program named for an influential former counselor at the school. The money supports students who want to take summer college courses during their high school years. Peter told a similar story of starting a scholarship in honor of a deceased faculty member. This involved the joint effort of many staff members and alumni. By working together, they were able to hold annual events to generate funds to help students pay tuition and the cost of books, class retreats and other expenses. The value of concern for others taught by educators at each school influenced individuals long after their school years.

Summary

Willingness to help and commitment to one another are values that pervade the community life of ALHS and OLLHS. These values are lived daily by individuals who seek to help and cooperate in any way they can to make others successful. Working together takes a variety of forms as formal committee work and spontaneous time taken to attend to others. The values students learn by their educators' example leads them to give back to help future generations of students.

Theme 2: Educators Function as a Family

A genuine widespread sense of concern for others, as explored in Theme 1, fostered familial relationships within the professional life of each institution. The familial bonds built between educators in turn allowed them to care more deeply for one another. Teachers and administrators felt a deep sense of belonging to their schools, fueled by presence to one another, appreciation for one another's efforts, and social interaction. Family unity made itself most visible in the losses suffered in the pandemic. School family life was supported by honest, trusting communication. At times, conflicts were mediated by administrators or faculty representatives. Interviewees mentioned "gravitating toward one another," family as a "number one" value, and being "all in this together."

Subtheme A: A Sense of Belonging

Educators at ALHS and OLLHS, along with students and other community members, have a strong sense of belonging to their school communities. Community and relationship are espoused values at both schools. James emphasized that ALHS devotes "a lot of energy, time, commitment, resources, [and] money…toward creating a sense of

community." In the recent accreditation report of ALHS, it was noted that the school's community spirit made it likely to succeed. The school's PLC plan made clear that the "relationship of the team members is critical to the success of the group." Admissions literature from OLLHS also stated that the school has "a strong belief in community" and "a genuine warmth and family spirit" that is sustained "for life." ALHS president Zach maintained that forming relationships is essential to recruiting new students.

Many interviewees powerfully expressed their connection to their schools as members of a family. Frank talked about how OLLHS's family spirit invites teachers to be involved and is the reason may stay there throughout their careers. Peter mentioned that the family feeling attracts new members to the community and is developed among students at the retreat house several miles north of the school. Several others also said that the retreat experience solidifies family togetherness among staff members. President Zach discussed what he called "the power of presence," which leads members of the community to support and dedicate themselves to one another. Likewise, principal John of ALHS praised his teachers for performing well and helping one another because of their sense of belonging, which drove their commitment. Anna in the guidance department proudly stated that the reason she stayed at ALHS for twenty years was because of "community life."

Staff members' sense of community is also enriched by the ways administrators show appreciation for them and their work. When teachers volunteered to substitute for their colleagues or help run events, they were thanked in messages published to the entire staff and sometimes to students. The president and principal at OLLHS gave every staff member a small Christmas gift as a token of appreciation. That school also created many

new events and other ways to show appreciation for women and persons of color in the community. At ALHS, veteran faculty members were honored with awards for their years of service.

Opportunities for human interaction also help build family togetherness. At OLLHS, the faculty cafeteria is a fixture in the community. Principal Andrew discussed how people in similar life phases, such as single young adults or new mothers, tended to gravitate toward one another. He also mentioned that people who have a common purpose or mission, such as coaches or people involved with retreats, tended to spend more time together. Mark talked about the value of being available to others for advice or help with the challenges of life, while Matthew mentioned that his coffee break in the cafeteria allowed him to share in brief conversations with teachers. Lisa said that teachers simply "enjoy each other's company." Other opportunities for human interaction in school included OLLHS's Spirit Week, where students and faculty had fun dressing casually or in costumes and competing in contests, and before and after business meetings, such as when Andrew shared a story about walking the new family dog, giving staff members an opportunity to laugh together. Educators also partook in social activities outside of the school day. Thomas and Frank each talked about the "happy gang," the happy-hour organizers named after the Marist Brothers' founder's group of friends. Outside of pandemic restrictions, the Christmas party and the June gathering honoring retirees or those who served for 25 or 50 years were highly anticipated and well attended.

Community members lamented the inability to gather due to the pandemic. In an edition of the OLLHS newspaper, a teacher was quoted, "What makes the school special is what we do while we are together. We do best when we are together. The faster we can

come together and make our Marist charism shine brighter, the better we will all be." Lisa indicated that at ALHS, faculty members communicate mostly by group text message since they often cannot meet in the same room. Anna mentioned the lack of inter-school professional development and said that meetings did not feel the same when held virtually. Mark and Peter said that the distance between colleagues was felt due to the physical distancing requirements and the removal of the faculty's buffet lunch. Still, as ALHS's faculty and student communications stated, the school communities were "thankful to be together" even at reduced capacity.

The family spirit was most heartily felt at OLLHS at the beginning of the pandemic. In March of 2020, about fifteen staff members were sickened by the virus, and some were hospitalized for several weeks. Thomas told the researcher about how he was there for his friend, a fine arts teacher, during the latter's hospitalization:

> During COVID, you know, during the height of it, [the teacher] was in an ICU… And he was not able to be in communication with anyone for a while. And then when he was able, he didn't have his cell phone. He could only communicate if someone called his room phone. And so almost no one was hearing from him. But his wife had spoken to him and I'm very close to him. And we spoke a few times on the phone. I was in touch with his wife a lot. I was relaying how he was doing to administration and [the nurse] and a few friends. And you know, that was really hard because there was a point where we had four people in the hospital at once and we had kids' dads dying.

This is only one example of how teachers were there for one another during the widespread sickness. In addition to that, a twenty-year veteran social studies teacher

passed away after a five-week battle against the coronavirus. Peter related that faculty members made themselves available to help one another deal with their grief. Like a well-functioning family, these educators showed that they could support one another through the most unimaginable of circumstances.

Subtheme B: Communication Helps the Family Function

In the daily life of the school family, educators at both ALHS and OLLHS benefit from clear, steady, and honest communication. Communication as a value was evident from the outset of observing the alumni center meeting at OLLHS. Members delegated tasks and reported their progress to one another, and the team kept the school administrators informed and relied on them when necessary. At ALHS, principal John's formal and informal conversations with teachers, coaches, and other personnel both kept him informed and let the others know that he cared about their success and wellbeing. Also, ALHS's pandemic reopening plan clearly indicated that it was the result of communication between stakeholders. Mark told the researcher that his department members at OLLHS communicated daily to support one another and share students' successes.

Openness and honesty were important aspects of communication at both schools. Principal Andrew mentioned that open communication was key to preventing and resolving conflict. He also said that when committees were formed, "it was no secret" who was on them, so that any staff member could approach someone who could bring their concerns to the relevant meeting or individual. Administrators at OLLHS came together every Thursday to discuss the week's events and make decisions. The administrators met with department chairpersons in monthly advisory board meetings.

There, each department's viewpoints and challenges were shared with administration. There was a two-way flow of information and input as chairs were also asked to gather input from their departments on certain issues, such as how to deal with inclement weather closures now that remote learning exists. ALHS's assistant principal talked about how communication was necessary among students, faculty, and administrators to deal with the social unrest following the killing of George Floyd in May of 2020, while OLLHS's president emphasized the central role of communication and cooperation in successfully carrying out the school's strategic plan.

Trust was also seen as a core value related to communication among staff members. Guidance director Anna said of the ALHS community:

> We started reaching out to faculty about students individually – these emails that the guidance people send on a regular basis. Like you know, "I want to tell you about Sally." I think that's trust because we trust that they'll keep it to themselves. They'll come to us individually. And I've never had a teacher betray that trust. You know, give them any opportunity to talk about a student individually, and you need their input… they feel useful, and they feel they want to help. So they do not betray the trust. I think trust is something that we all share. And it's just magic. I don't know if it's like that at every school. I don't know, I've only worked here; in my professional capacity I have only been at [ALHS].

Additionally, James mentioned that in his role as assistant principal, trusting the faculty and gaining their trust in return is essential. John reinforced this in saying that he trusts the teachers he hires not only in their ability to teach, but also in their ability to handle issues that arise with students or parents. John also ensured that honesty and "emotional

safety" were essential in teachers' conversations during professional learning community meetings. Andrew spoke of how committee work allowed teachers to see him at work, which built their confidence in him, while he gained a better understanding of how his faculty worked together.

In both schools, there was a general sense that educators understood one another, even if people disagreed on instructional methods or school procedures. In cases of conflict, people usually arrived at a "live and let live" solution and "felt heard" by one another, according to counselors and administrators at OLLHS. Some interviewees informed the researcher of significant conflicts that occurred in the past few years, such as reactions to negative social media posts, ignoring problems involving students when they occurred outside of school, the challenges of reconfiguring old departmental structures, and political differences between teachers. In these conflicts, communication and consensus were highlighted as the key to resolving differences.

Administrators said that effective hierarchical procedures helped improve communication as well. Frank maintained that as an administrator, he had the right to take control of a situation between adults when their conflict became visible to students. James and John each explained that teachers might first raise a concern in their departments, then chairpersons discuss with an assistant principal, and lastly the administrators come together to handle the situation if it is not yet resolved. Educators at both schools expressed that mediation by the principal is sometimes necessary in a disagreement between teachers, and that sometimes it is wise to speak to both parties together and other times it is not. Zach also mentioned that faculty have to mediate some situations as union representatives when there is a lack of clear communication about

expectations of the work environment. Smooth conflict resolution helped to maintain family togetherness within the institution.

Summary

Family dynamics, from bonding and belonging to conflict and its resolution, were clearly visible at each institution. In this theme, as in the first, being centered on the good of others helps individuals create and maintain relationships. Communication was valued as a necessity. It often proved essential in the restoring of relationships harmed by conflict and kept small conflicts from escalating.

Theme 3: Mission in All Aspects of Life

Life at the two sample institutions was characterized by mission-driven practices and values. As Catholic schools, both ALHS and OLLHS prioritized Catholic identity and lived it daily in formal and informal ways, such as through a robust prayer life and longstanding traditions. The mission itself unified educators, who supported its fulfillment through their professional and personal behavior and came together to serve others. The mission of each school involved Catholic faith life, academic excellence, and being a person of integrity and compassion. Students were educated in each of these areas by word and example.

Subtheme A: Catholic Identity Characterizes School Life

Life at ALHS and OLLHS is characterized by strong Catholic identity evident from the images and statues that line the halls, the information published by the school community, and most importantly, the lived experiences of community members. The materials published about the schools' pandemic reopening strategies place "Catholic values at the heart of the schooling experience" and call for the central virtue of "hope in

the face of despair." Lisa described how ALHS lives out the call of St. Francis of Assisi to "preach [the Gospel] and use words when necessary" in their daily interactions with one another, setting an example of love, kindness, and welcoming to their students. Matthew expressed how having a faith life at work made his position more than simply a job and caused him to believe he was following his life's calling. Mark explained his understanding of the value of faith in the mission of OLLHS:

> I believe the mission of a place like [this] is to remind students [of] all they can be in the loving perspective of the framework of the Marist Brothers, using Mary as our guide. And that's used a lot of times in the Church. But I think very specifically, it means saying yes to challenges that you might not know the answer to, and you kind of need a bit more faith than you currently have to see them through. I think that's huge.

People who are not Catholic are welcomed at both schools. Andrew mentioned that "you don't have to be Catholic to work at [OLLHS]" but that having some idea of God in one's life made it easy to fit in with the mission. Anna, who is not Catholic, said the mission of ALHS for her is "do unto others as you want others to do unto you" and felt that it is lived daily by all staff members. Despite being non-Catholic, Anna felt that the school was a "warm, nurturing" place and still counseled her students according to faith-based principles, stating that she sometimes involved God in her work even more than the counselors who were Catholic.

Both schools displayed an intense and consistent prayer life. Even though COVID-19 limited in-person gatherings, each school still prioritized celebration of Mass, the central form of worship in Catholicism. With some students and teachers present in

person and others watching from their classrooms or homes, Mass took place on the school days nearest to Thanksgiving Day, Christmas, and Easter Sunday. Daily Mass was celebrated in each school's chapel, and most teachers customarily began each class with a prayer. Other holy days and seasons were observed through daily prayer and online retreat experiences. Outside of pandemic restrictions, the schools and the religious communities that staff them hosted faculty retreats and other opportunities for educators to pray and reflect together. At ALHS, principal John expressed that he was grateful "to work in a Catholic school in challenging times because prayer is hope…whatever the challenge is – this year it's a pandemic – prayer brings hope." Anna highlighted that campus ministry's efforts to bring the school together in prayer helped the ALHS community both celebrate and mourn, especially during recent events.

Tradition also plays a part in the robust Catholic identity of the high schools in the present study. ALHS cherishes its Franciscan tradition, as evidenced by the prominence of St. Francis' tau (T-shaped) cross, his prayer for peace, and the annual celebration of his feast day in October, also the day teachers are honored for milestone years of service. The school also traditionally sends two faculty members per year on a pilgrimage to the saint's hometown of Assisi, Italy, for faith formation. Likewise, OLLHS prides itself on a deep connection to founder St. Marcellin Champagnat and the Marist congregation that he founded. Thomas recounted a pilgrimage to the saint's home in France and the admiration he gained for St. Marcellin as he ate, slept, and prayed where the saint did nearly two centuries ago. More routinely, retreats at the Marist Brothers' property north of the school take place several times during the typical school year and are a tradition for students and faculty alike. The Marist Pillars (presence, simplicity, love of work, family

spirit, and following the humble, God-loving example of Mary, Mother of Jesus) are an important part of how students and teachers at OLLHS live. President Zach explained:

> We have a certain style of culture at school, this thing called Marist charism, Marist mission. It does boil down to the five pillars of Marist education. You know, we teach the students to have a personal relationship with God. And it's their own relationship, you know, we're not dictating and telling them what they can and can't do. But we're educating them and inspiring them. And many people are inspired by being a servant leader, running programs, encounters, service projects, our retreat program, and each one of those is designed so that individuals can give their own witness talk to say how their lives have been positively impacted. And then that inspires young students to think about their relationship with God and their relationship with each other.

At meetings and during interviews, several others demonstrated similar convictions toward St. Marcellin, the Marist way of life, and the desire to pass these values and traditions on to students.

Subtheme B: Mission as a Unifier

Mission in itself has the power to bring about and sustain relationships. ALHS and OLLHS educators demonstrated that mission is central to school life. Andrew stated that "the concept of building togetherness is all about putting mission and vision at the forefront of why you're doing everything," and John believed that "community life is wrapped around…mission and spiritual development." John also mentioned that procedures at ALHS are mission-driven, and that being a Catholic school separated his institution from the nearby public high schools. Zach described living the mission at

OLLHS as "everydayism," a constant habit of placing mission at the forefront. Conversations in the guidance department, said Mark, are approached from a Marist point of view, while Lisa described mission and spirituality as "always present in the school." Recruitment materials from OLLHS also placed mission prominently, emphasizing the Marist Brothers' work and dedication to Gospel values.

Faculty support for the schools' religious and educational mission allow both to be fulfilled. Assistant principal Frank appreciated that teachers came to Mass with students on days when Mass was optional. Assistant principal James said that faculty members were understanding and flexible when opportunities for prayer, retreats, or the sacrament of Confession cut into class time. He added that every teacher's prayer time at the beginning of each class period demonstrated "commitment to the mission." When a teacher's personal moral convictions differed from the Catholic mission and morals of the school, all parties involved understood one another well enough to approach the situation without compromising either side's conscience. Throughout the school year, faculty members' support of the regulations put in force because of the pandemic allowed the schools' educational mission to go on.

A sense of shared mission and purpose was seen as essential to the ability to fulfill the schools' missions. Andrew emphasized how important mission is in the hiring process, describing how an aspiring assistant principal was not selected for either of two open positions in September of 2020 because, although very intelligent and credentialed, she did not seem invested in the mission of OLLHS. Andrew stated that he and his administrative team chose Matthew and another individual because their commitment to mission stood out. Likewise, John mentioned that his school's interview process involved

ensuring that the prospective teacher or administrator would be willing and ready to "live out the school's Franciscan mission." Lisa included that her department's shared purpose facilitated cooperation. Andrew valued the way a common mission brought together people who would not bond otherwise, such as those at different stages of life and career or teachers from different departments. He said that shared mission made it easy to agree on decisions about policies, practices, and goals for the school community. Frank believed that mission was the very reason educators decide to work at OLLHS:

> I think one of the key things in Catholic education is that we're here because we believe in something bigger and more important than ourselves. There's this common root, right?... a common experience that we all have that allows us to be who we are. It's something that is transcendent and something that is, it's not changing. I'd love to say we're all in it because of this at the end of the day, right? And I think that being able to bring together all of these different people, but attaching ourselves to this ideal and this truth is so key, and one of the things that separates us from all other schools.

Coming together for mission is most evident in the effort put forth to serve others. Service, an essential component of Catholic life, takes place when administrators display servant leadership in the daily ways they help teachers and one another and also in the unique events that allow staff and students to help the less fortunate together. At ALHS, James described "midnight runs" where a team made and delivered food to the homeless along with several volunteer days at a soup kitchen attached to a nearby Catholic church. At OLLHS, community members served others through domestic and international mission trips and by hosting camps at the retreat center for children with disabilities.

Subtheme C: Education Beyond Academics

For the two schools in the present study, mission fulfillment means more than solely academic excellence. A faith-filled, moral education includes not only worship, retreats, and service, but also educating the young person in body and heart as well as in mind. Lisa described ALHS's mission as "solid education, but with a Franciscan approach" and talked about the cross-curricular inclusion of elements of the Franciscan charism, such as social justice and care for the environment. James remembered that John's philosophy was "the first part of being a Catholic school is being a good school" academically, but spiritual, social, and physical elements of education were also important pieces of the ALHS curriculum. John stated this himself in his interview and emphasized the role of togetherness:

> We know kids will come to us with certain talents and aspirations, but what we aim to do, what our mission is, is that we look to develop and broaden those skills that they bring to us from an intellectual, physical, social, emotional, artistic standpoint. And we do this not in a vacuum, but we do this together. Everyone plays an important role in the development of students: the students themselves, our staff, guidance counselors, faculty. Together we're hoping to create this Catholic, Franciscan environment that we say is filled with academic success, integrity, respect and joy. So that's in essence what we try to do, that's in essence what we are as a school, that's our mission. And we try to stay close to that every day that we're in school.

The mission statement and other materials published by the school also repeatedly highlighted these multiple facets of education. At OLLHS, Andrew echoed this in naming

"spiritual awareness and growth" as a key component of education. Matthew spoke of educating students in the faith, after the example of St. Marcellin, who found his calling when he was called to give last rites to a terminally ill young boy and was saddened by the fact that the youth had no knowledge of God or the Catholic belief in heaven. Matthew mentioned that educators, therefore, had the responsibility to teach students morality, respect, and love. Teachers expressed that they taught this by example. A number of years ago, when a student was about to be expelled for poor behavior, one educator came forward to advocate for the student since her behavior was the result of very unfortunate circumstances at home. That student and her family were grateful for this teacher's compassion. Frank and Mark each expressed that being there for students was immensely valuable, as students were inspired and encouraged to persevere and to value themselves and others, eventually going on to lead successful lives.

Summary

The mission of each institution is fulfilled by individuals who consistently center mission in all they do and support it through daily practices. Catholic faith life is essential and never forsaken at these schools and is expressed in a range of ways from religious rituals to the classroom. The mission to educate the whole person is carried out by all. Dedication to the mission holds each school family together.

Connection to Research Questions

The present study sought to answer two research questions. The first question concerned how administrators and teachers in Catholic high schools build relationships, as evidenced by organizational citizenship behaviors. These behaviors, paraphrased, include concern for others, volunteerism, commitment to work, and conflict avoidance

and resolution. From each of the themes in this chapter, it is evident that these behaviors form the basis of relationships at ALHS and OLLHS. Administrators and teachers demonstrated commitment to one another, their work, and institutional mission. Teachers were willing to help one another regardless of reward, pay, or job description and often gave of their personal time. Administrators especially gave of themselves to ensure a smooth school year amid the pandemic. Administrators maintained a focus on mission and faculty members were steadfast in upholding it. Conflicts were remedied through communication and understanding by both administrators and faculty.

The second research question dealt with how the relationships among educators affect the practices aimed at fulfilling institutional mission. Since educators cared for one another and formed enduring bonds, working together to support the institutions' religious and educational missions became second nature. Because each school was a family, people in different roles or departments could come together to complete tasks necessary to the quality operations of their schools. Individuals were selected to work at the institutions based significantly on their perceived dedication to the mission, which enabled them to participate wholeheartedly in mission-driven activities and prioritize the good of the school and its students.

Conclusion

This chapter focused on the main thematic elements that resulted from the case study data. The researchers found that the educators at both sample schools came together through the genuine care they displayed toward one another, which allowed them to function as a family in a mission-oriented environment. The following chapter contains a deeper analysis of the connections between behaviors, relationships, and mission.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The present study was a multiple exploratory case study involving two Catholic high schools in a northeastern United States metropolis. The study investigated professional relationships among educators and how togetherness among them influenced practices that allowed the schools' missions to be fulfilled. As stated in Chapter One, two research questions were investigated. The first concerned how relationships among educators were built and maintained in the context of Catholic high schools, as evidenced by organizational citizenship behaviors, or OCB (Organ, 1988), including altruism, courtesy, conscientiousness, sportsmanship, and civic virtue or volunteerism. The second research question dealt with the ways togetherness among educators affected practices aimed at mission fulfillment. Important existing research on OCB, community life, trust, and mission was reviewed in Chapter Two.

Chapter Three provided an explanation of the methodology of the study. Data were gathered through interviews, observations, and content analysis. In total, seven administrators and four faculty members were interviewed, two meetings were observed, and seventeen pieces of content, including published materials and faculty communications, were analyzed. Data analysis through three cycles of coding yielded three themes, as explored in Chapter Four. The first concerned the ways that care for others caused individuals to be centered on others' good and behave in ways that prioritized helpfulness and selflessness. The second theme involved the resemblance of school communities to the family unit, including how educators experienced belonging and interacted with one another on a human level and how communication held the

communities together, at times bearing them through episodes of conflict. The final theme explored how mission was lived in different aspects of school life, including the schools' Catholic faith life and the ways students were educated in multiple areas of life, not solely academics.

This final chapter sets forth the interpretation of the results explained in Chapter Four in light of the two research questions that guided the case study. It also includes the ways the study complements the existing body of knowledge and explores the study's limitations and implications for future research and practice.

Interpretation of the Results

The research questions asked in the present study dealt with the formation, maintenance, and effect of togetherness among educators. The data explained in Chapter Four lend themselves to the analysis of these aspects as a continuum rather than separately, as the relationship-building behaviors immediately bore fruit in actions that helped the community and mission. Therefore, the results are interpreted within this section by theme, rather than by research question.

Theme 1: Concern for Others

It was immediately evident that both administrators and faculty members were convinced that helping others was important. Administrators were compassionate toward teachers and others within their school communities. For example, when an assistant principal granted a teacher permission to teach remotely to care for his ailing family member, he did not penalize the teacher if for some reason a lesson or assignment was not given that day. Decisions such as these demonstrated that human concern for others was of value and, within reason, prioritized above job responsibilities. Administrators

also gave up personal time to make sure that teachers' work lives ran smoothly and safely amid the coronavirus pandemic. This habit was emulated by faculty members, who believed that giving up their time was important. They volunteered whenever possible. Thus, the organizational citizenship behavior of civic virtue, or willingness to volunteer (Organ, 1988), was evident throughout both communities.

Faculty members were willing to assist one another in a range of ways, from helping colleagues understand instructional techniques and technologies to substituting for one another's classes and helping plan and run events. They extended their workdays with no extra remuneration; even when it was given, it was not the reason for the teachers' choice to help. Teachers and administrators who were alumni took pride in returning to their alma maters to give back; some even gathered other alumni to support the school financially and in other ways. Here, the OCB of altruism was on display. Both civic virtue and altruism helped the schools fulfill their educational missions smoothly in a year of endless uncertainty. Amid the isolating effects of the pandemic, educators' willingness to help brought individuals together to ensure the continuous operation of the schools.

Educators were committed to one another, a character trait that flowed out into commitment to their work. Administrators who had real personal matters to attend to worked until it was no longer possible, whereupon their teammates selflessly and skillfully covered for them. Faculty modeled a strong work ethic, marked by Catholic values, to their students. Work within and across departments, such as professional learning communities or reopening task forces, succeeded because of steady communication and person-centered procedures set forth by administrators and followed

by faculty members. In these areas, the OCB of conscientiousness was exemplified within both schools as committee work enabled and enhanced cohesive mission fulfillment.

Theme 2: Educators Function as a Family

Administrators valued community life within their institutions and devoted money, time, and other resources to ensuring its prosperity. They created structures such as meeting routines and annual gatherings that brought people together. Faculty members remained at their institutions for much or all of their careers because of their sense of belonging, and deepened relationships with one another through mutual involvement in school life. At both schools, belonging drove commitment among the faculty, and administrators recognized and encouraged both. Administrators showed their appreciation for their faculty members as people and for the hard work they did daily. Genuine friendships fueled by human social interaction and lightheartedness as well as bonding over life stages and sharing sorrows contributed to the family atmosphere.

Communication held these school family units together. Administrators prioritized open and honest communication with faculty and believed that communication prevented conflict. Faculty members trusted one another and generally felt comfortable approaching one another, making it easier to work together for the good of the students. A two-way sense of trust was in place between faculty and administrators, and there were clear policies for conflict resolution. The OCB of courtesy, including conflict-preventing behaviors, and sportsmanship, or a lack of complaining and willingness to get along (Organ, 1988) were present in these situations, making cooperation possible as necessary for mission fulfillment.

Theme 3: Mission in All Aspects of Life

Faculty and administrators possessed a sense of vocation, purpose, and dedication to their faith life, and lived this out in their daily duties and at special community events such as schoolwide liturgies. Administrators ensured that these events took place even during the pandemic and faculty members supported them with their presence. Even outside of pandemic restrictions, faith events were supported by faculty members, who made accommodations in their teaching and assessment for students who attended retreats or sacramental services. Administrators made all faculty members, Catholic and non-Catholic, feel welcome; thus, all people were equally invested in school mission. Faculty members used their faith in the classroom by praying with students daily and embedding mission into the curriculum.

All educators were able to unite under the banner of mission; a sense of shared mission and shared core Catholic values brought people together. Administrators kept mission at the forefront when hiring, choosing staff members who would most likely dedicate themselves to living out the institution's core values and purposes. Both administrators and faculty supported service opportunities to live out the tenets of Catholicism in visible and effective ways. All educators in the present study also believed in and practiced the mission of educating each student in heart, soul, body, and mind.

Implications of the Study

The results of the present study highlight the importance of togetherness in school life and the value of prioritizing the good of other persons or of the institution above one's own good. As stated in the significance of the study in Chapter One of this document, isolation is detrimental to teacher performance and student success, while

shared responsibility for the mission and the community (Barth, 2001; Garza Mitchell and Parnther, 2018) is necessary for schools to prosperously fulfill their mission. As shown in the lived experiences within the two sample schools during the coronavirus pandemic, giving of self and coming together with others proved vital in carrying out the schools' mission. Rather than counting contract hours in the name of "work-life balance," freely giving one's time was more beneficial to the communities.

The study also moves away from the faceless side of education concerned only with standards and scores and instead emphasizes the human side. Schools are not factories turning out products, so human relationships deserve pride in the school environment. Education is more than just a means of earning a living. This idea is even more true when Catholic identity is included. Living in communion with God and others and being of service is essential to Catholic life, and Catholic schools thrive when these ideals are lived out. As stated in several interview excerpts, educators' behavior sets an example for students; mission cannot be fulfilled by preaching or classroom teaching alone.

Implications for Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks

The results of the present study have implications not only for the wider understanding of Catholic school life, but also for the theoretical and conceptual frameworks laid out in Chapter One. The study was built upon the framework of OCB (Organ, 1988), and it is evident from the previous section of this chapter that most behaviors exhibited by educators to create and maintain togetherness fall into one or two of the categories devised by Organ. However, OCB categories do not adequately capture faith-related togetherness because Organ was not operating in a faith-based organization

when he developed his theory. Faith-based organizations presuppose a belief system deeply ingrained into individuals that mark their entire lives and shape the way they interact with one another. Living out a faith-based mission involves working toward a higher purpose than simply helping someone or working through conflict.

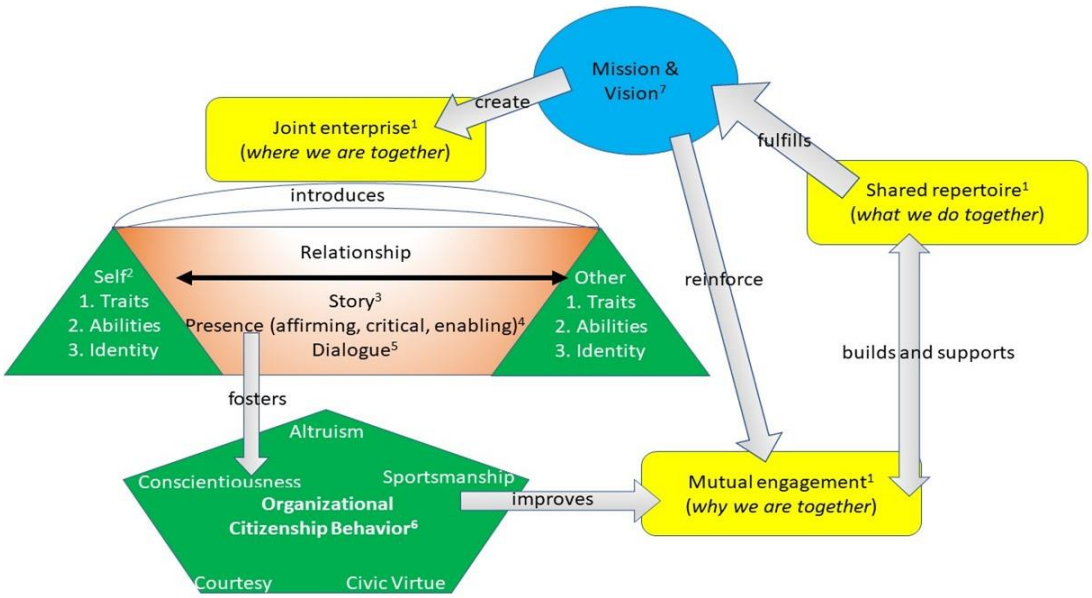
The study was also built upon the community of practice framework (Wenger, 1998), which consists of joint enterprise, mutual engagement, and shared repertoire. In other words, a community is unified by its purpose, collaborative activities, and practices resulting from the togetherness of its members. The Catholic schools in the present study fit this model quite well. The sense of shared purpose or mission that all respondents held dear was the joint enterprise that brought them together and gave individuals a common perspective on why and how to do what they did as a community. Because of this common goal, the educators were able to work together successfully, engaging in activities that benefited one another, their students, and other members of the community. Educators' solidarity coupled with their consistent cooperation helped them to develop a shared repertoire of practices and traditions that made their community cohesive and distinct from other communities.

Based on the role of mission in bringing Catholic school communities together, the researcher proposes a slight but important reworking of the conceptual framework presented in Chapter One. The original framework placed individuals, conceptualized as Self and Other, in relationships brought about by shared purpose or joint enterprise. These people would then exhibit OCB to one another to maintain their relationships, allowing them to work together to support mission. The results of the study, especially within the subtheme of mission as a unifier, make the argument that the mission

(including the organization's vision for itself, which is guided by the mission) is the reason for coming together in the first place. After all, administrators consider willingness to live the mission as a prerequisite for joining the community. Therefore, as expressed in Figure 2, the processes at work in these organizational relationships are a cycle: mission creates togetherness, which in turn supports mission.

Figure 2

Revised Conceptual Framework: Togetherness for Mission



[1]Mercieca, 2017 [2]McAdams, 1996 [3]Adler & McAdams, 2007 [4]Starratt, 2004 [5]Senge, 1990 [6]Organ, 1988 [7]Dosen, 2016

Relationship of the Present Study to Prior Research

The present study is connected well with the theoretical frameworks utilized in its conception and the existing literature on the different explored elements. The findings support the claims made by prior researchers on organizational citizenship behavior, trust and relationships, communities of practice, and mission. At the two sample schools, individuals came together to deliberate and make decisions, coming to a consensus when perspectives differed. Lin (2017) found that ease in deliberation and willingness to make

decisions as a team facilitated working for the good of others. In the present study, this was true in committee work and policy making in teams consisting of administrators, faculty, or both. The attitude of cooperation between the ranks of educators, as opposed to top-down leadership, contributed to the success of relationships and resulted in practices that furthered school mission. Hierarchical behavior was only employed where absolutely necessary, specifically in conflict resolution. This supported the findings of Elstad et al. (2011) that top-down leadership was detrimental to cooperation. These researchers also found that viewing work solely as a means of earning money was harmful to the ability to work with others, an idea reinforced by the way teachers in the sample schools did not look forward to remuneration for the ways they helped one another. Educators were willing to give back to their communities and only ceased when they were about to be exhausted by out-of-school commitments (Akar, 2018). Administrators' appreciation of teachers' hard work resulted in steady or increased commitment among faculty, consistent with the results of a study by Lawrence et al. (2012), and the organizational citizenship of all adults in the community affected student success positively (Burns & DiPaola, 2013).

The relationships between educators in this study also corroborated the existing research on the value of trust and humanness in relationships. The behavior within professional learning communities at ALHS allowed teachers to support one another in a trusting environment, a benefit of PLCs explained in the research of DeMatthews (2014). Consistent, clear, open, and honest communication was a practice espoused by administrators in both sample schools, enhancing cooperation and fostering trust, as is indicated in the findings of Angell et al. (2009) and Hallam et al. (2015). Trust and

honesty were essential in helping both communities deal with the constant changes in procedures due to inconsistent directives from the state during the coronavirus pandemic, which agreed with the main point of Sutherland's (2016) case study, that trust and togetherness help a school community get through a crisis successfully. In the daily life of the teachers, a mindset of collaboration and emphasis on relationships positively affected their well-being, supporting the results of Stoloff et al.'s focus group interviews (2020).

The schools in the present case study displayed several features that lead to community bonding according to prior research. Human interaction and the formation of genuine friendships took place among faculty members; individuals relied on each other for help and advice in their personal lives and enjoyed one another's company, leading to increased collaboration (Cherkowski, 2012). Cherkowski (2012) also found that administrators' real concern for their faculty as human persons, not just as coworkers, led to bonding in the professional environment. Administrators at the sample schools were sympathetic to those who had real personal emergencies and gave them the time and space to attend to them without any job-related penalties. Wennergren and Blossing (2017) found evidence that feelings of trust and belonging led to faculty members' success in developing instructional strategies together. This was also evident among the sample in the present study, especially in the struggles of teaching with new technology in a hybrid instructional setting. Teachers enjoyed working with one another and thus did so more easily (Samuel, 2020). Through this type of cooperation, each faculty was able to develop new shared knowledge as they worked together toward a common goal (Pyrko et al., 2017).

Research on community bonding regarding Catholic faith life and on mission fulfillment in Catholic schools was also supported by this study. Hagan and Houchens' (2016) claim that a robust prayer life among teachers establishes mutual support and encourages collaboration was evident from the importance of prayer at observed faculty meetings at OLLHS. Huchting et al. (2017) found that a community whose focus was on mission and celebrating their faith together rather than competing with one another was more cohesive. This was obviously present in the present study as each community celebrated its faith wholeheartedly as a family. As seen in the ethnographic work of Tidd (2009) and a case study by Valadez (2019), the present sample of educators viewed one another as partners in the religious and worldly aspects of school life and lived their schools' missions in ways that led alumni to live these values out through their lives, even coming back to teach the next generation of students how to do the same. According to Cho (2012), commitment among Catholic teachers was influenced by an active faith in God, while non-Catholic teachers were driven by their professional goals. In the two sample schools, teachers were welcome in the community and displayed drive and enthusiasm for the mission whether they were Catholic or not. Striepe and O'Donohue (2014) and Hobbie et al. (2013) indicated that leadership consistent with Catholic identity, including values such as service, presence, vocation, and commonality of mission, make school vitality possible. The leaders of both sample schools lived these tenets out in their daily practice and in so doing, fostered enduring togetherness among their community members.

Implications for Research

The present study adds to the existing body of literature in that it unifies the

different aspects of relationship that have been discussed by other scholars while examining these relationships from the perspective of mission. As seen in the revised conceptual framework, this work offers a model of mission-based togetherness that is multifaceted, uniting the spiritual, relational, and professional aspects of educators' lives in Catholic high schools. Many different aspects of relationships described here, such as communication, trust, or altruism, or any combination of these may serve as variables of interest to future researchers. The perspectives of teachers, administrators, and other educational staff may each also be analyzed in greater depth. The contributions of Catholicism to the togetherness of school community members may also serve as a starting point for exploratory or comparative research with other faiths or moral systems.

The research is also unique because it was conducted during the coronavirus pandemic. There is an inherent challenge in studying the phenomenon of togetherness amid almost uncontrollably isolating circumstances. In this full year of altered relational paradigms, the case study makes the statement that togetherness remains important to educators. The study may serve as a reference point for future research on the effects of the pandemic and other crises on cohesiveness among school staff members.

Recommendations for Future Research

The present case study can be built upon in several ways by future research. As aforementioned, the pandemic provides an altogether new area for research on schools and their communities. A longitudinal case study could be conducted on several schools to determine how their community life has changed because of the pandemic and its isolating effects. Such a study could include interviews that elicit information about significant aspects of community life under typical circumstances and how it changed

under lockdown and after. As schools hopefully return to normal educational paradigms, the study could include observations of how community life evolves and whether or not it is the same as before the pandemic. This would provide deeper insight into the pandemic's influence on institutional togetherness.

Another area for future research may be to conduct a quantitative analysis of educators' perceptions of their and others' organizational citizenship behaviors and of relationships within institutions. Utilizing a behavior scale devised by the researchers or already developed by other scholars (Podsakoff et al., 1990), the relationships between individuals' behaviors and the atmosphere of togetherness within a school could be analyzed. In addition, predictions could be made on the effects of demographics such as age, gender, or years of experience on individuals' behaviors and perceptions. For a study involving effects of many variables upon one another, multiple regression would be most appropriately used as a statistical method (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2019).

An additional area for study may focus on how mission is lived out through community life in non-religious private or public schools. It would be interesting to compare the ways communities come together in religious institutions with the ways they do in secular ones and how each type of institution understands the concept of mission. A qualitative methodology similar to the one used in the present study could also analyze professional relationships in secular schools. As the body of literature on relationships expands, religious and secular institutions may learn from one another.

Lastly, a grounded theory methodology (Creswell & Poth, 2016) may be used to develop a sociological theory of togetherness in schools. By gathering qualitative data from a wide variety of school communities, researchers could build a theory that explains

how community cohesion is maintained. This theory could then be tested by researchers in the even farther future, leading to a large corpus of literature that would benefit the educational and sociological communities.

Recommendations for Future Practice

The results of the present study lead to recommendations for practice by administrators, faculty members, and those who participate in their formation. Administrators could benefit by remembering to model trust, honesty, altruism, and clear communication, and foster these and other unifying values in concrete ways. For example, administrators could create conflict-resolution procedures that encourage trust among staff members. New administrators could conduct school culture assessments to examine professional relationships before planning changes. School leaders could also make a consistent practice of inviting educators with different school roles to participate on policy-making committees. This would allow faculty members to feel that they belong to the community and have decision-making power together with administrators. Leaders can provide opportunities for educators to come together not only professionally, as in team teaching or professional learning communities, but socially, celebrating various occasions throughout the year with events that allow genuine human interaction.

Faculty members should avoid isolating themselves from one another or within their department; this would require support from leaders who build cooperation into instructional life in ways such as scheduling time for collaboration or implementing cross-curricular units within grade levels. Outside of instruction, teachers should be encouraged to volunteer at school events and to give of themselves whenever possible. Practitioners must remember that the elements that bring a community together –

belonging, family spirit, volunteerism, trust and the like – cannot be forced; they can only be fostered.

In this regard, formators of Catholic school administrators and teachers hold a special responsibility. It is recommended that they instill the values mentioned above in future teachers and leaders to the best of their ability. A concrete way of doing this could be a course on spirituality and mission within a preparation program focused on Catholic schools. In such a course, educators would be encouraged to reflect on the importance of community in their own lives and explore ways to develop it within their institutions. In-service Catholic educators could also benefit from formation events around these topics organized by the diocese or religious order responsible for their school.

Limitations of the Study

Though it was able to fulfill its purpose, the present study was subject to a few limitations. The researcher selected schools to study around the same time that leaders were hectically planning the reopening of their schools in September of 2020 amid pandemic restrictions. This severely constrained principals' availability and willingness to allow the researcher into their schools, even virtually, to conduct interviews. Two leaders did not respond to requests for permission at all, and another hesitated and then ceased to respond, leaving the researcher to study his institution and one other. Throughout the study, both schools' inconsistent instructional schedules and the constraints on physical proximity led to a lack of observable meetings and events. Faculty members struggled to manage instruction in a hybrid format amid quarantines and other disruptions, leaving only a few willing participants for interviews.

Another limitation of the study was the school's unwillingness that the researcher does not belong to in giving the researcher access to certain materials and events. The principal of that school did not give documents such as the faculty handbook and other codifications of professional life to the researcher for confidentiality reasons, despite the confidentiality assured him in the letter of informed consent. The principal also did not allow the researcher access to administrative meetings for similar reasons. Having access to these could have given the content analysis and observation portions of the study greater depth and made them stronger complements to the data-rich interviews.

A third limitation is researcher bias, which the researcher steadily checked by self-reflection to make sure the schools were reflected equally throughout the study. The researcher needed to make sure his affiliation to the network of Catholic high schools and employment at one of the sample schools did not color his analysis, whereas an unaffiliated researcher would have been more objective from the outset. The researcher's affiliation was also a strength, however, in building rapport with all interviewees and gaining a wealth of information from them.

Conclusion

The present study was conceived as an investigation of the ways togetherness is built and maintained among educators in Catholic secondary schools and the relationship of that togetherness with practices that fulfill the schools' Catholic and educational missions. Constructed on Wenger's (1998) concept of the community of practice and Organ's (1988) classification of organizational citizenship behaviors, the framework of the study connected persons in relationship with their behaviors for the good of others, behaviors to practices, and practices to mission. Interviews, observations, and content

analysis were included within this multiple exploratory case study (Yin, 2018) as methods of gathering data about the lived experiences of administrators and faculty members at Ascension of the Lord High School and Our Lady of Life High School in order to examine the dynamics of professional relationships. Educators were found to show genuine concern for and willingness to help one another, function as a family kept together by honest communication, and live the Catholic mission out in both spiritual and instructional aspects of school life. The results of this study led to a refined framework, a reciprocal cycle in which mission was the reason for coming together just as much as togetherness supported mission. This study has implications for a school environment that is focused on working for the good of others after the example of Jesus set forth in the Gospels, the foundation of the Catholic mission and life.

APPENDIX A: PRELIMINARY REQUEST FOR PERMISSION

Dear _____,

My name is Jonathan and I am a doctoral student in the Department of Administrative and Instructional Leadership at St. John's University. I am also an educator at a Catholic high school.

I am beginning dissertation research this fall. My project is a qualitative study concerning collaboration and togetherness among educators in Catholic high schools and how these enable the schools to fulfill their mission.

I am interested in gathering data for this project at your school. This would entail conducting interviews with you and a few other administrators and teachers as well as possibly observing faculty meetings. I would also be interested in analyzing documents that reflect the mission of the school, such as student and faculty handbooks and/or relevant parts of accreditation or strategic planning documents at your discretion. All data would be kept confidential, and the school and persons involved would be given pseudonyms within the dissertation.

Of course, due to the pandemic, I would be flexible in meeting at the school or virtually, in accordance with your established procedures. Data gathering would happen on agreed-upon days during October and possibly November.

Please let me know if you are willing to grant me permission to conduct research at your school. This would allow me to place your school on a short list of possible research sites, from which a final determination would be made by September. The research project is currently in the preliminary stages and more formal details would be provided as we move into the fall.

All the best as you continue to prepare for the start of term.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Mangar
jonathan.mangar17@stjohns.edu
917-698-2723

APPENDIX B: IRB APPROVAL

Federal Wide Assurance: FWA00009066

Nov 23, 2020 12:09:16 PM EST

PI: Jonathan Mangar
CO-PI: Ceceilia Parnther
Ed Admin & Instruc Leadership

Re: Expedited Review - Initial - **IRB-FY2021-153** *Togetherness for Mission in Catholic Secondary Schools*

Dear Jonathan Mangar:

The St John's University Institutional Review Board has rendered the decision below for *Togetherness for Mission in Catholic Secondary Schools*. The approval is effective from November 20, 2020 through November 19, 2021.

Decision: Approved

PLEASE NOTE: If you have collected any data prior to this approval date, the data must be discarded.

Selected Category: 7. Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

Sincerely,

Raymond DiGiuseppe, PhD, ABPP
Chair, Institutional Review Board
Professor of Psychology

Marie Nitopi, Ed.D.
IRB Coordinator

APPENDIX C: LETTER OF INFORMED CONSENT AND SIGNATURES

Dear Participant,

You have been invited to take part in a research study to learn more about relationships among individuals in educational settings. This study will be conducted by Jonathan Mangar, of the Department of Administrative and Instructional Leadership (DAIL) within the School of Education at St. John's University, as part of his doctoral dissertation. His faculty sponsor is Ceceilia Parnther, Ph.D., also of DAIL.

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to do the following:

(1) Take part in one interview concerning your professional relationships with others, both adults and students,
(2) Be observed in your normal professional role(s), and
(3) Participate in a follow-up interview if necessary.

Due to COVID-19 precautions, data will be gathered virtually. Your interviews will be audio- and video-recorded and stored digitally. You may review these files and request that all or any portion of the tapes that include your participation be destroyed.

Participation in this study will involve about three hours of your time: approximately 90 minutes for the initial interview, up to one hour of observation, and approximately 30 minutes for any subsequent interview.

There are no known risks associated with your participation in this research beyond those of everyday life.

Although you will receive no direct benefits, this research may help the investigator better understand relationships within educational settings.

Confidentiality of your research records will be strictly maintained by password protection in the researcher's account within St. John's University's licensed use of Microsoft OneDrive and on an external hard drive. Your identifying information will not be recorded in interview transcripts or published in any way unless you indicate permission below. Your responses will be kept confidential with the following exceptions: the researcher is required by law to report to the authorities suspicion of harm to yourself, to children, or to any others.

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without penalty. For interviews, you have the right to skip or not answer any questions you prefer not to answer.

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2/7/2021
Date

Dennis Pernithan

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Joseph Castellano

Subject's Signature

8 January 2021
Date

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Robyn armon 2/3/21

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If there is anything about the study or your participation that is unclear or that you do not understand, if you have questions or wish to report a research-related problem, you may contact Jonathan Mangar at 917-698-2723 or jonathan.mangar17@stjohns.edu or the faculty sponsor, Cecelia Panther, Ph.D., at 718-990-1305, Sullivan Hall - Room 519 (8000 Utopia Parkway, Queens, NY 11439), or pantherc@stjohns.edu.

For questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the University's Institutional Review Board, St. John's University, Dr. Raymond DiGiuseppe, Chair, digiuser@stjohns.edu 718-990-1955 or Dr. Marie Nitopi, IRB Coordinator, nitopim@stjohns.edu 718-990-1440.

_____ Yes, I give the investigator permission to use my name when quoting material from our interview(s) in his dissertation, presentations, et cetera.

X No, I would prefer that my name not be used.

You have received a copy of this consent document to keep.

Agreement to Participate

Casey Clark
Subject's Signature

2/10/21
Date

APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Administrators

Thank you for volunteering to participate in this study about how professional relationships are formed and maintained and how they influence mission fulfillment in Catholic high schools. Through interviews with faculty members and administrators, I am seeking to understand how Catholic educators work together.

In our interview today, I am interested in any experiences you have had where you and other educators at _____ High School came together in professional, spiritual, or social settings and built a sense of togetherness. I am also interested in the aspects of school life that allow this unity to be built.

Again, thank you for letting me interview about relationships among educators and mission fulfillment.

First, how would you define community life as experienced at your school? How do educators come together?

What opportunities do you provide for educators to work together? Describe a common activity in which this happens.

Give an example of a time when a team or committee worked to achieve a goal. What were the results?

Please give an example of how conflict is handled among staff members.

How do faculty members show willingness to give of themselves to the school community? Do you notice people going "above and beyond" expectations? How?

Describe an instance in which you helped another or others in the school community in a time of difficulty.

In your own words, what is the mission of this school? How do you and your colleagues live it out?

How do human and spiritual elements (trust, openness, Catholic identity, loyalty, common beliefs or habits, etc.) allow educators at your school to come together?

Thank you for sharing your experiences and perspectives with me. Your thoughts are valuable in helping me describe how educators build togetherness. Is there anything I did not ask that you would like to share?

Faculty

Thank you for volunteering to participate in this study about how professional relationships are formed and maintained and how they influence mission fulfillment in Catholic high schools. Through interviews with faculty members and administrators, I am seeking to understand how Catholic educators work together.

In our interview today, I am interested in any experiences you have had where you and other educators at _____ High School came together in professional, spiritual, or social settings and built a sense of togetherness. I am also interested in the aspects of school life that allow this unity to be built.

Again, thank you for letting me interview about relationships among educators and mission fulfillment.

First, how would you define community life as experienced at your school? How do educators come together?

What opportunities are there for educators to work together? Do teachers take advantage of these opportunities? Describe a common activity in which this happens.

Give an example of a time when you worked with a team or committee to achieve a goal. What were the results?

Please give an example of how conflict is handled among staff members.

Describe an instance in which you showed willingness to give of themselves to the school community. Do you ever go "above and beyond" expectations? How?

Describe an instance in which you helped another or others in the school community in a time of difficulty.

In your own words, what is the mission of this school? How do you and your colleagues live it out?

How do human and spiritual elements (trust, openness, Catholic identity, loyalty, common beliefs or habits, etc.) play a role in relationships among faculty members?

Thank you for sharing your experiences and perspectives with me. Your thoughts are valuable in helping me describe how educators build togetherness. Is there anything I did not ask that you would like to share

APPENDIX E: QUESTION-THEORY CROSSWALK TABLE

Interview Questions: Administrators

Question	Research Question	Theory/Construct
How would you define community life as experienced in your school? How do educators come together?*	How are relationships formed and maintained among administrators and teachers in a Catholic secondary school?	Community of practice/joint enterprise (why we are together)
What opportunities do you provide for educators to work together? Describe a common activity in which this happens.	How are relationships formed and maintained among administrators and teachers in a Catholic secondary school?	Community of practice/mutual engagement (how we come together)
Describe an instance in which you helped another or others in the school community in a time of difficulty.	How are relationships formed and maintained among administrators and teachers in a Catholic secondary school?	Organizational citizenship behavior/altruism
Please give an example of how conflict is handled among staff members.	How are relationships formed and maintained among administrators and teachers in a Catholic secondary school?	Organizational citizenship behavior/courtesy; sportsmanship
In your own words, what is the mission of this school? How do you and your colleagues live it out?	In what ways do these relationships affect the practices that are aimed at fulfilling the school's mission?	Community of practice/joint enterprise (why we are together)
How do human and spiritual elements (trust, openness, Catholic identity, loyalty, common beliefs or habits, etc.) allow educators at your school to come together?*	In what ways do these relationships affect the practices that are aimed at fulfilling the school's mission?	Organizational citizenship behavior Community of practice/shared repertoire (what we do together)
How do faculty members show willingness to give of themselves to the school community? Do you notice people going "above and beyond" expectations? How?	In what ways do these relationships affect the practices that are aimed at fulfilling the school's mission?	Organizational citizenship behavior/civic virtue; conscientiousness
Give an example of a time when a team or committee worked to achieve a goal. What were the results?	In what ways do these relationships affect the practices that are aimed at fulfilling the school's mission?	Community of practice

***Adapted from Liebman, Maldonado, Lacey, and Thompson, 2005**

Interview Questions: Faculty

Question	Research Question	Theory/Construct
How would you define community life as experienced in your school? How do educators come together?*	How are relationships formed and maintained among administrators and teachers in a Catholic secondary school?	Community of practice/joint enterprise (why we are together)
What opportunities are there for educators to work together? Do teachers take advantage of these opportunities? Describe a common activity in which this happens.	How are relationships formed and maintained among administrators and teachers in a Catholic secondary school?	Community of practice/mutual engagement (how we come together)
Describe an instance in which you helped another or others in the school community in a time of difficulty.	How are relationships formed and maintained among administrators and teachers in a Catholic secondary school?	Organizational citizenship behavior/altruism
Please give an example of how conflict is handled among staff members.	How are relationships formed and maintained among administrators and teachers in a Catholic secondary school?	Organizational citizenship behavior/courtesy; sportsmanship
In your own words, what is the mission of this school? How do you and your colleagues live it out?	In what ways do these relationships affect the practices that are aimed at fulfilling the school's mission?	Community of practice/joint enterprise (why we are together)
How do human and spiritual elements (trust, openness, Catholic identity, loyalty, common beliefs or habits, etc.) play a role in relationships among faculty members?	In what ways do these relationships affect the practices that are aimed at fulfilling the school's mission?	Organizational citizenship behavior Community of practice/shared repertoire (what we do together)
Describe an instance in which you showed willingness to give of yourself to the school community. Do you ever go "above and beyond" expectations? How?	In what ways do these relationships affect the practices that are aimed at fulfilling the school's mission?	Organizational citizenship behavior/civic virtue; conscientiousness
Give an example of a time when you worked on a team or committee to achieve a goal. What were the results?	In what ways do these relationships affect the practices that are aimed at fulfilling the school's mission?	Community of practice

***Adapted from Liebman, Maldonado, Lacey, and Thompson, 2005**

APPENDIX F: OBSERVATION PROTOCOL

Location of Observation: _____ Date/Time: _____

Type of interaction (e.g. faculty meeting): _____

Individuals observed & their roles:

_____
_____
_____
_____

Evidence of coming together as a community of practice:

_____
_____
_____
_____

Evidence of organizational citizenship behavior (altruism, courtesy, conscientiousness, civic virtue, sportsmanship):

_____
_____
_____
_____

Evidence of other behaviors concerning relationships:

_____
_____
_____
_____

Negative evidence (e.g. isolationism, argument, selfishness):

_____
_____
_____
_____

Summary of the interaction:

APPENDIX G: CONTENT ANALYSIS PROTOCOL

Type of Content (e.g. foundational document, accreditation report, publication, Internet content/social media): _____

Individuals included & their roles:

_____
_____
_____
_____

Evidence of coming together as a community of practice, or expectations thereof:

_____
_____
_____
_____

Evidence of organizational citizenship behavior (altruism, courtesy, conscientiousness, civic virtue, sportsmanship), or expectations thereof:

_____
_____
_____
_____

Evidence of other behaviors concerning relationships:

_____
_____
_____
_____

Evidence relating to mission fulfillment:

_____
_____
_____
_____

Summary of the content's contribution to body of data:

APPENDIX H: MEMBER CHECKING EMAIL

Hello ,
Thank you again for participating in my research study. As part of the research process, I am sharing with you the main ideas from our interview that were included in the Results chapter of the dissertation. Please take a look and let me know whether the following is an accurate representation of our conversation and your views on the subject of school togetherness for mission.

In our interview, you:

Thanks,
Jonathan

APPENDIX I: CODEBOOK

First Cycle Codes

Code	Definition
Altruism	Behaviors that help others without helping oneself
Alumni returning to school	Alumni work at their alma mater or participate/help in other ways
Catholic Identity	Catholic faith lived out - prayer, symbolism, values, etc.
Civic virtue	Willingness to volunteer
Commitment	Devotion to the organization, to a cause, or to others
Communication	How and why information and ideas are shared
Community Building	Ways individuals are brought together
Searching for community in pandemic	Desiring to come together in ways disallowed by the coronavirus pandemic and resulting restrictions
Conscientiousness	Attentiveness to one's work
Courtesy	Behaviors that help to avoid conflict
Decision making	Process of creating policies or procedures together
Love/appreciation for one another	Genuine concern for others and/or gratitude toward others
Mission	Descriptions of school mission and/or vision and how they are lived
Hiring for mission	Conscious decisions by admin to recruit staff who will live out the mission
Professional work together	Collaboration for instruction or other daily professional duties
Sportsmanship	Avoiding complaining
Trust	Confidence in others
Vocation	Sense of living out or following one's calling in life

Results of Second and Third Cycle Coding
3T = Theme, 3S = Subtheme, 2 = 2nd Cycle Code

3T Concern for others brings individuals out of themselves.

3S Community members give back to their communities.

2 Alumni returning to school (value)	Alum returning to school is seen as a core value in community
2 Giving back	Giving back (time, money, etc.) to one's alma mater

3S People help one another freely in job-related and non-job-related ways.

2 Altruism as value	Demonstration of altruism as a value within organization
2 Altruism job-related	Helping others in ways directly related to one's daily duties
2 Altruism non-job related	Helping others in ways not connected to one's regular daily duties
2 Collaboration extra-role	Working with others in ways unrelated to one's job description
2 Compassion	Concern for the needs of others
2 Giving up time	Showing or mentioning giving up personal/unscheduled time to help others
2 No remuneration	Altruistic behaviors done without stipend or regard for stipend
2 Willingness to help	Willingness to help others

3S Work with others takes place within and across departments.

2 Commitment as value	Commitment is seen as a value within organization
2 Commitment to work	Commitment to one's job role
2 Cross departmental work	Work involving different departments coming together
2 Instruction	Coming together for the purposes of classroom education
2 Instruction - COVID	Helping others get through challenges in classroom due to pandemic
2 NEG Commitment	Negative example of commitment
2 NEG Instruction	Not sharing instructional ideas / isolating oneself

3T Educators function as a family.

3S Communication helps to mediate conflict.

2 Communication as value	Communication as a value within organization
2 Consensus	Coming to an agreement in a conflict or decision-making process
2 Courtesy	Behaviors that help to avoid conflict
2 Hierarchy	Evidence of hierarchichal system of collaboration or conflict resolution
2 Mediation by admin	Conflict mediation by administrators
2 Mediation by faculty	Mediation by faculty/staff in conflict resolution
2 NEG Understanding one another	Behaviors showing a lack of understanding
2 Openness	Open and honest communication
2 Trust	Confidence in others and their abilities
2 Understanding one another	Behaviors showing understanding in communication

3S Educators have a sense of belonging.

2 Appreciation	Showing gratitude for others' presence and/or actions
2 Belonging	Feelings of being at home in the school/organization
2 Community as a value	Strong community bond is valued in organization
2 Family	Family spirit/feeling among educators or within community
2 Human interaction	Bonding among educators outside of professional conversations
2 Organic community building	Spontaneous actions/events that bring people together
2 Relationships as value	Relationship-building as a value within community
2 Searching for community in pandemic	Desiring to come together in ways disallowed by the coronavirus pandemic and resulting restrictions
2 Social life	Social interactions among adults in the organization

3T Mission is lived in all areas of school life.

3S Catholic identity characterizes school life.

2 Being non-Catholic	Experiences of non-Catholic members of organization
2 Catholic identity as a value	Catholic identity esteemed by members of the organization
2 Formal Catholic identity	Formal events, such as holiday observances, where faith is expressed
2 Prayer life	Experiences of prayer within the school community
2 Tradition	School traditions such as annual gatherings and retreats

3S Mission is a unifier in itself.

2 Centrality of mission	Mission as the main focus of actions within the school
2 Faculty support	Faculty cooperating to support Catholic faith life
2 Hiring for mission	Mission involvement as a factor in hiring process
2 Mission as value	Esteem/enthusiasm for the mission of the school
2 Service	Doing good for others within or outside of the community
2 Shared mission	Sense of having a common mission
2 Shared purpose	Sense of common purpose among educators
2 Vocation	Sense of living out one's calling in life

3S Students are educated beyond academics.

2 Education beyond academics	Education of the whole person (body, mind, soul)
2 Mission across curriculum	Mission of school emphasized in many areas of education
2 Moral education	Education in the faith and morals espoused by Catholicism
2 Service to students	Helping students in need

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